



**EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES OF EXPATRIATE  
TEACHERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY  
OF CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHERS AT  
A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN THAILAND**

**BY  
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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
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### Abstract

In an era of increasing globalization and the demand for multicultural education, the experiences of international educators, particularly Chinese language teachers in non-Western contexts, remain underexplored. This study seeks to investigate the lived experiences of five Chinese language teachers in Thai private schools, aiming to understand how they navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by their new cultural and working environments. Employing a phenomenological qualitative methodology, grounded in Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory (CDT), this study provides a nuanced analysis of the factors influencing their professional adaptation. Key findings reveal the critical roles of structural factors, such as institutional norms and policies, alongside cultural and linguistic dynamics, in shaping these teachers' experiences. The study also uncovers the paradoxical empowerment through marginalization, offering new insights into the flexibility and autonomy that emerge in such contexts. Despite these findings, this study is limited by its small sample size and focus on a specific geographical and cultural setting, which may not be generalizable to other contexts. Future research should explore a broader range of international teaching environments and consider longitudinal studies to better understand the evolving experiences of transnational educators over time.

(Total 121 pages)

Keywords: Chinese Language Teachers, Chinese Language Education in Thailand, Immigrant Teachers, Phenomenological Study, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), Cultural Dimension Theory (CDT)

Student's Signature ..... Thesis Advisor's Signature .....

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a bridge that connects cultures, facilitates communication, and fosters understanding among diverse societies (Jackson, 2019). In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to communicate in multiple languages is not just a valuable skill but a necessity (Johnstone et al., 2018). Among the languages that have garnered significant attention for their cultural, economic, and diplomatic relevance, the Chinese language stands out as a formidable force (Zhou, 2018). As China continues to assert its presence on the world stage, the demand for Chinese language proficiency has grown exponentially (Starr, 2009). This demand is not limited to Chinese-speaking communities but extends to individuals worldwide, including Thailand, where the Chinese language has gained substantial importance (Guo, Shin, & Shen, 2020).

In Thailand, the pursuit of Chinese language proficiency has been met with enthusiasm, particularly in the realm of education. Thai students and professionals alike are increasingly seeking to acquire language skills that can provide them with a competitive edge in a globalized job market and enable them to engage more deeply with China's rich cultural heritage and economic opportunities (Guo et al., 2020). To facilitate this endeavor, a dedicated group of educators, known as Chinese Language Teachers (CLTs), has emerged as the architects of language acquisition and cultural exchange in the Thai educational landscape.

While the significance of CLTs in shaping language education in Thailand is evident, there remains a distinct dearth of comprehensive research that delves into their professional roles, cultural experiences, and the impact of cultural factors on their lives. Furthermore, the specific context of private schools, unlike that of the public school, has received limited scholarly attention. Therefore, this research aims to

address this gap by conducting an in-depth exploration of the experiences of Chinese Language Teachers (CLTs) in Thailand's private school settings.

Chapter 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the background, research problem, objectives, questions, conceptual framework, significance, limitations, and key term definitions, setting the stage for the research in a clear and structured manner.

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

In recent years, with the development of globalization and the growing demand for multicultural education, the exchanges between China and other countries have become increasingly close, including the Chinese language which serves as a second language (CSL) (Loh, Tam, & Lau, 2019). An increasing number of Chinese language teachers go to foreign countries to teach Chinese (Aimin, 2015), and the upsurge of learning Chinese has only increased due to factors such as increasing interactive activities of the world peoples in the borderless world. Because Chinese is one of the most important international languages of the United Nations, education has long been a significant channel for cultural and knowledge exchange between nations (Duan, Nie, & Coakes, 2010). In recent years, the increase in global mobility has led to a more diverse educational workforce worldwide, especially in Southeast Asia. Thailand, with its strategic geographical location and open economic policies, has become a focal point for educational exchanges in the region (Sebestyén, Domokos, & Abonyi, 2020). This has resulted in a substantial influx of foreign teachers, particularly from China, who are employed in private educational institutions across the country. The experience of these educators is not only pivotal to their personal and professional development but also instrumental in shaping the cross-cultural teaching landscape and bilateral relationships between China and Thailand.

The demand for Chinese language proficiency has surged due to China's expanding role in global business and politics (Zhang, Wu, & Zhu, 2020). This has positioned Chinese teachers as critical assets within Thai private schools, where parents and administrators are keen to equip students with the language skills

necessary for future opportunities. Through a series of agreements between China and Thailand, many Chinese language teacher volunteers have been recruited to teach Chinese (Guo et al., 2020). In Thai schools to provide Chinese education for Thai students. Thailand's "Chinese fever" has taken the lead among that of other ASEAN countries, propelled by the long-time historical bond between the peoples of the two nations.

The importance of the Chinese language teachers' (CLTs) lives in Thailand cannot be overstated (Eisenberger, Shanock, & Wen, 2020). Their ability to adapt to and integrate into Thai society significantly impacts their teaching effectiveness and overall job satisfaction. Successful adaptation involves not only overcoming language barriers and cultural differences but also establishing a sense of community and belonging within the Thai educational environment (Guo et al., 2020). The well-being and professional fulfillment of CLTs are crucial for maintaining the quality of Chinese language education in Thailand, as their personal and professional experiences directly influence their teaching practices and interactions with students (Xu, Zhang, Sukjairungwattana, & Wang, 2022). Therefore, understanding the lives of CLTs in Thailand is essential for fostering a conducive environment for both educators and learners, ultimately contributing to the broader goals of cultural exchange and mutual understanding between China and Thailand.

The phenomenological approach to this study is grounded in its ability to gather nuanced and subjective realities from a substantial sample of Chinese teachers, providing a deep and comprehensive details of their lived experience. Such an approach will facilitate the identification of common experiences and challenges, allowing for a more objective assessment of the support systems and policies that could enhance the professional lives of these educators.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

With Thailand's educational reforms and the burgeoning number of private schools aimed at integrating Eastern and Western pedagogies, there is an emerging need to qualitatively assess the life experiences of Chinese teachers who are at the nexus of these cultural and educational dynamics. The stressors, job satisfaction levels, cultural adaptation processes, and the overall well-being of these educators are pivotal to understanding their capacity to contribute effectively to the educational landscape (Si, 2023).

Moreover, the influx of Chinese teachers in Thailand's private schools presents a unique model to study cross-cultural exchanges in an educational setting (Hallinger, Liu, & Piyaman, 2019). There is, however, a scarcity of empirical data regarding how Chinese teachers navigate their professional roles within the Thai private educational sector, which has implications for educational policy, teacher training programs, and the academic outcomes of students (Liu & Sammons, 2021).

It is argued that most Chinese language teachers have insufficient knowledge about Thailand and the Thai people (Liu & Sammons, 2021; Wang, 2020). This is due to a short period of orientation before coming to Thailand. A number of Chinese language teachers lack necessary teaching experience, knowledge and understanding of the Thai culture and cross-cultural competence. This affects their Chinese teaching in Thailand. In other words, the Chinese language teachers seem to have many problems both in their personal and working life.

Because of difficulties arising from moving to work in a new culture, the Chinese language teachers may find that they cannot work at the top of their ability (Wang, 2020). These teachers need to adapt to a new lifestyle in Thailand. According to Yang and Ren (2020), Chinese language teachers should improve their cultural communication skills (Xie, Ryder, & Chen, 2019). Besides, many Chinese language teachers in Thailand are not skilled in the Thai language, and language barriers lead to communication problems with educational affairs (Gong, Gao, & Lyu, 2020).

Cultural differences are probably one difficulty among others both at work and in daily life (Nuere & De Miguel, 2021). Take an example on views of teachers' clothes in different countries. Female teachers in Thailand are required to wear shirts with collars and sleeves as well as over-the-knee-length skirts. When some female teachers do not get dressed based on the required dress code, they are seen as showing improper behavior. In another example, in Thailand, it is a taboo to touch a person's head as people generally believe that the head is the top part of the body to respect. On the contrary, in China, teachers can pat a student on the head; Chinese language teachers regard this as a friendly act. The way a person speaks varies from one to another culture. Thais speak very lightly, but some Chinese language teachers like to speak loudly, which can be mistaken for being impolite or a show of anger (Huang, 2020).

Arguably, research on cultural factors affecting the experience of Chinese language teachers in private schools in Thailand provides a comprehensive examination of the unique challenges and dynamics these educators face. Central to the study is the exploration of how cultural differences between China and Thailand impact teaching methodologies and the overall teaching experience. This includes an in-depth look at the adaptation of Chinese language curricula and pedagogies to suit the Thai educational context and the needs of Thai students. A significant aspect of the research involves understanding the challenges posed by the multilingual and multicultural environment in Thailand. It delves into the specific barriers Chinese teachers encounter, such as language differences and divergent cultural expectations in the classroom. The study also considers the effects of Thailand's educational policies on Chinese language education, examining how these policies shape teaching strategies and experiences.

Another crucial area of focus is the professional development and support available to Chinese language teachers in Thailand. This includes an analysis of how such support systems influence their job satisfaction, professional growth, and effectiveness in teaching. The research further investigates the socio-economic factors that drive the demand for Chinese language education in Thailand and how these factors affect the experiences of Chinese language teachers. Additionally, the research

explores the integration of technology in teaching Chinese, the interpersonal dynamics between Chinese teachers and Thai students, and the impact of these relationships on classroom management and learning outcomes. It also looks at the perceptions and attitudes of Thai students towards learning Chinese from native Chinese teachers, providing valuable insights into student-teacher interactions.

Overall, the study offers a multifaceted understanding of the experiences of Chinese language teachers in Thai private schools, highlighting the complex interplay of cultural, linguistic, structural factors in shaping their professional journey.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

1.3.1 to explore the lived experiences of Chinese language teachers in Thai a private school.

1.3.2 to identify the opportunities and challenges encountered by these teachers in their professional lives.

1.3.3 to examine the ways in which Chinese language teachers interact with and respond to their working experiences influenced by cultural differences.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1.4.1 What is the essence of the lived experiences encountered by the Chinese teachers?

1.4.2 What opportunities and challenges did they encounter as Chinese teachers?

1.4.3 How and to what extent did the Chinese teachers cope with the cultural differences at work?

## 1.5 Conceptual Framework

This study integrates Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and Hofstede's cultural dimension theory to understand the lived experience of five Chinese language teachers in Thai private school.

Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals can effectively communicate and interact across cultural boundaries. Defined by Byram (1997), ICC encompasses the ability to not only use a language proficiently but also to engage meaningfully with the cultural contexts that shape language use. The model integrates linguistic skills with cultural understanding, thus providing a holistic approach to intercultural communication. This framework is particularly valuable in educational settings, where the goal is to prepare students to navigate and thrive in a globalized world.

The model includes five core components: Attitudes, Knowledge, Skills of Interpreting and Relating, Skills of Discovery and Interaction, and Critical Cultural Awareness. Attitudes (*savoir être*) refer to the openness and curiosity towards other cultures, while Knowledge (*savoirs*) involves understanding social groups and cultural practices. Skills of Interpreting and Relating (*savoir comprendre*) enable individuals to interpret cultural information and relate it to their own context. Skills of Discovery and Interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*) focus on acquiring new cultural knowledge and applying it in real-time communication. Critical Cultural Awareness (*savoir s'engager*) is the ability to critically evaluate cultural norms and practices, fostering a reflective and evaluative approach to both one's own and others' cultures (Byram, 1997). This critical component encourages deep reflection on cultural identities and practices, promoting an inclusive and empathetic worldview (Deardorff, 2006).

Byram's ICC model is utilized extensively in educational contexts, particularly in curriculum design, teacher training, classroom practice, and assessment. Curriculums are designed to include intercultural objectives that promote not only linguistic skills but also cultural understanding. Teacher training programs focus on equipping educators with

strategies to foster intercultural competence in their students. Classroom practices involve interactive and reflective activities that engage students with cultural differences. Additionally, assessment tools are developed to evaluate not just language proficiency but also intercultural competence, using methods such as reflective essays and self-assessment checklists (Risager, 2007). Through these applications, Byram's model helps educators prepare students for effective intercultural communication in an increasingly interconnected world.

Hofstede's cultural dimension theory (2011) is a widely used framework for understanding cultural differences across various societies. This theory identifies six dimensions that describe the effects of a society's culture on the values and behaviors of its members. These dimensions are: Power Distance, which measures the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept power inequality; Individualism versus Collectivism, which examines the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups; Masculinity versus Femininity, which looks at the distribution of emotional roles between the genders; Uncertainty Avoidance, which assesses the tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; Long-term versus Short-term Orientation, which considers the focus on future rewards versus past and present; and Indulgence versus Restraint, which looks at the degree of freedom in fulfilling human desires (Hofstede, 2011).

Hofstede's cultural dimension theory providing a comprehensive framework for analyzing the impact of cultural differences on international teachers' experiences, thus, is adopted in this study. By examining these dimensions, the study can explore how cultural values influence the adaptation, teaching practices, and interpersonal interactions of Chinese teachers in a Thai educational context. This theoretical framework helps in identifying specific cultural challenges and opportunities that these educators face, offering insights into how they navigate and integrate their personal and professional identities within a cross-cultural environment (Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2017).

Hofstede's cultural dimension theory is widely utilized in the field of education to investigate the influence of cultural factors on teaching and learning. For example, Huo and Gough (2016) applied the theory to understand how cultural

dimensions affect student-teacher relationships and classroom dynamics in international schools. Similarly, Tung (2014) used Hofstede's framework to analyze the cultural challenges faced by expatriate teachers in multicultural classrooms, highlighting the importance of cultural competence in fostering effective teaching and learning. These studies demonstrate the applicability of Hofstede's theory in examining the complex interplay of cultural factors in educational settings, providing a robust foundation for exploring the lived experiences of international educators.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

The research on the cultural factors affecting the experience of Chinese teachers in private schools in Thailand can fill several research gaps and contribute to enriching both theories in the following ways:

**Cross-Cultural Educational Dynamics:** This research can provide insights into the specific dynamics of cross-cultural interactions in an educational setting, a topic that is relatively underexplored, especially concerning Chinese teachers in Thailand.

**Adaptation Strategies:** The study can identify specific strategies Chinese teachers use to adapt to the Thai cultural and educational environment, contributing to literature on cultural adaptation in teaching.

**Impact of Multilingual Contexts:** It can shed light on how teaching a language (like Chinese) is influenced by the linguistic and cultural landscape of a multilingual country like Thailand, filling a gap in current language education research.

**Educational Policy and Cultural Factors:** The research can explore how Thai educational policies affect Chinese language teaching and how these policies interact with cultural factors, offering new insights into the intersection of policy and culture in education.

**Enriching Teacher Experience Research:** By focusing on Chinese teachers in Thailand, the research can add to the body of knowledge about teaching experiences in diverse cultural contexts, which is often underrepresented in existing literature. The study can explore and document specific strategies that Chinese teachers use to adapt their teaching methods and content to fit the Thai cultural context, thus enriching our understanding of pedagogical flexibility and adaptation. **Professional Development Insights:** Research findings can provide insights into the types of professional development that are most effective for teachers working in a culturally different environment, contributing to the field of teacher training and continuous professional development. **Impact of Cultural Differences on Teacher Well-being:** Investigating how cultural differences and challenges impact the mental and emotional well-being of teachers can add a significant dimension to teacher experience research.

**Contributions to Cross-Cultural Communication and Foreign Adaptation Research:** Practical Applications of Theoretical Models: The study can test and expand existing theoretical models of cross-cultural communication and adaptation in the specific context of Chinese teachers in Thailand, providing real-world applications and insights.

**Developing New Frameworks:** The unique setting and challenges faced by Chinese teachers in Thailand can lead to the development of new frameworks or models for understanding and facilitating cross-cultural communication and adaptation in educational settings. The research findings can inform the design of cultural competence training programs for teachers, emphasizing practical skills and strategies for effective cross-cultural communication and adaptation.

**Broadening Cross-Cultural Understanding:** By providing detailed insights into the experiences of Chinese teachers in Thailand, the research can contribute to a broader understanding of the complexities and nuances of cross-cultural interactions in educational settings. The findings can contribute to building a global perspective on teaching and learning, recognizing the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptability in an increasingly interconnected world.

In summary, this study has the potential to fill significant gaps in understanding the cross-cultural dynamics of education and can contribute to the practical application and contextual enrichment of both theories, especially in the realm of education and language teaching. This research can enrich the field of teacher experience research by providing deep insights into the cultural challenges and adaptation strategies of Chinese teachers in Thailand. It can also make significant academic contributions to the fields of cross-cultural communication and foreign adaptation, offering practical and theoretical advancements.

### **1.6.2 Practical Significance**

The research on the cultural factors affecting the experiences of Chinese teachers in private schools in Thailand holds practical significance in several areas, including from the perspectives of the teachers themselves, Thai schools, teacher training programs, educational policy, and overall education quality. Here's how:

From the perspective of Chinese Teachers: The study provides Chinese teachers with insights into the cultural challenges they may face in Thailand and strategies for effective adaptation and integration into the Thai educational context. It can inform Chinese teachers about the specific skills and competencies needed to succeed in a culturally different environment, aiding in their professional growth and development. Understanding the cultural dynamics and potential challenges can help Chinese teachers in managing stress and enhancing their mental and emotional well-being while working abroad.

From the Perspective of Thai Schools: Thai schools can use the findings to develop strategies for effectively integrating Chinese teachers into their educational systems, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious school environment. Schools can benefit from understanding the cultural perspectives and teaching styles of Chinese teachers, which can contribute to building a culturally competent and diverse educational setting. Improved Student Learning Outcomes: By adapting to the needs and strengths of Chinese teachers, schools can enhance the learning experience for

students, particularly in language and cultural studies.

In terms of Teacher Training: The research can inform the development of tailored teacher training programs that address the specific needs of Chinese teachers working in Thailand, focusing on cultural adaptation, language skills, and teaching methodologies. It can contribute to the broader discourse on training teachers for global competence, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptability in diverse educational settings.

Regarding Educational Policy: The findings can guide policymakers in creating supportive policies that facilitate the recruitment, integration, and retention of foreign teachers in Thailand. The research can inform the development of policies that promote cross-cultural understanding and cooperation in education, benefiting both local and foreign teachers.

Insights from this study can help in enriching the educational experience by integrating diverse cultural perspectives, thereby enhancing the quality of education. By understanding the cultural factors affecting Chinese teachers, schools can adopt more effective teaching and learning practices that cater to a diverse student body. The study contributes to the global discourse on maintaining high education standards in increasingly multicultural learning environments.

In summary, this study is significant in providing practical guidance and insights for Chinese teachers, Thai schools, teacher training programs, and policymakers, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of education quality through a deeper understanding of cross-cultural dynamics in education.

## **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

This study employs a phenomenological qualitative method, grounded in Byram's cultural dimensions theory, to explore the lived experiences of five Chinese language teachers in a Thai international school. While the study provides rich insights

into the complex interplay of cultural and institutional factors influencing these teachers, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations inherent to this research.

One of the primary limitations is the small sample size. The study focuses on the experiences of only five Chinese language teachers. While in-depth qualitative studies can offer profound insights, the findings from such a limited sample may not be broadly generalizable. The unique experiences of these five teachers might not fully represent the diversity of experiences encountered by Chinese teachers in other Thai international schools or different international contexts. Future research could benefit from including a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

The context is specific to a single Thai international school, limiting the transferability of the results. The cultural, institutional, and educational dynamics of this particular school may differ significantly from those in other schools within Thailand or in other countries. Consequently, the findings may not be directly applicable to other settings. Comparative studies across multiple schools or countries could provide a broader understanding of how different contexts influence the experiences of international teachers.

Language barriers and cultural differences between the researcher and participants might also influence the data collection and interpretation processes. Misunderstandings or misinterpretations due to language differences could potentially distort the findings. Additionally, cultural nuances and the researcher's own cultural biases might affect the interpretation of participants' experiences. Utilizing bilingual researchers or translators and engaging in cultural competence training can help mitigate these issues in future studies.

The study captures a specific period and set of circumstances within the lives of the five teachers. Changes in institutional policies, cultural dynamics, or personal circumstances could alter the teachers' experiences over time. Thus, the findings are temporally bound and may not reflect ongoing or future changes in the teachers' professional and personal lives. Longitudinal studies could provide a more dynamic understanding of how teachers' experiences evolve over time in response to changing contexts.

Acknowledging these limitations is crucial for contextualizing the findings and guiding future research. While this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of Chinese language teachers in a Thai international school, expanding the sample size, incorporating diverse contexts, and employing mixed methods could enhance the robustness and generalizability of future research. Addressing language and cultural barriers, considering temporal factors, and utilizing multiple theoretical frameworks will further contribute to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the complexities faced by international teachers.

## 1.8 Definition of the Key Terms

**Teaching Chinese as the Second Language (TCSL):** Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (TCSL) refers to the pedagogical and instructional practices employed in the education of individuals whose native or first language is not Chinese, and who are seeking to acquire proficiency in the Chinese language as a means of communication, cultural engagement, or academic pursuit (Ho-kin et al., 2021).

**Chinese Language Teachers (CLTs) in Thailand:** Chinese Language Teachers (CLTs) in Thailand refer to educators who are responsible for instructing and facilitating the teaching and learning of the Chinese language within the educational context of Thailand. These teachers are typically tasked with the responsibility of imparting Chinese language proficiency, both in terms of spoken and written Chinese, to students who may vary in age, linguistic backgrounds, and learning objectives (Draper, 2019).

**Chinese Language Teachers' Lives in Thailand:** The lives of Chinese language teachers in Thailand encompass a multifaceted and dynamic interplay of personal, professional, and cultural dimensions (Cho, 2014). These teachers, often referred to as "Chinese Language Teachers" or "CLTs," are individuals who have undertaken the responsibility of instructing and fostering the acquisition of the Chinese language within the educational landscape of Thailand.

**Private School in Thailand:** Private schools are from the different regions in Thailand. A private school in Thailand refers to an educational institution that operates independently of the Thai public school system (Engchuan, Pengloon, Yenphech, Phoowong, & Som-In, 2023). These schools are typically funded through tuition fees and private contributions rather than government funding. Private schools in Thailand offer an alternative to the public education system, characterized by diverse curricula, a focus on English language and international education, smaller class sizes, better facilities, and a more global educational perspective.

**Cultural Factors:** Cultural factors refer to the various elements of culture that influence people's behaviors, beliefs, and interactions (Shengnan & Hallinger, 2021). In the context of Chinese teachers working in Thailand, these factors might include, but are not limited to (Byrame, 2003, 2009, 2011)

**Experience of Chinese Teacher in Thailand:** Chinese teachers in Thailand have unique and multifaceted experiences that encompass both their professional roles as educators and their personal lives as individuals living and working in a foreign cultural context. This holistic experience is shaped by a confluence of factors, including linguistic proficiency, cultural adaptation, educational contexts, and societal dynamics.

**Professional Work Experience:** Chinese teachers in Thailand engage in language instruction, designing curricula, creating instructional materials, and delivering lessons to a diverse group of learners. Their pedagogical practices are influenced by the specific educational institution where they work, whether it be a public school, private school, language institute, or other educational setting.

**Lived Experience:** Chinese teachers in Thailand undergo a process of cultural adaptation, experiencing both the challenges and rewards of living in a foreign country. They must negotiate cultural differences, language barriers, and adapt to local customs and social practices. The intersection of their Chinese identity with their role as language educators in Thailand can lead to complex identity dynamics. They may grapple with questions related to their cultural identity and their position as cultural ambassadors.

## 1.9 Conclusion

This study embarked on a journey to explore the multifaceted world of Chinese Language Teachers (CLTs) in Thailand's private schools. We began by acknowledging the growing importance of the Chinese language in today's globalized world and the significant role that CLTs play in fostering language proficiency and cultural understanding. Our exploration unveiled a compelling research context, where Thailand's pursuit of Chinese language proficiency intersects with the dedicated efforts of these educators.

This study identified the research problem, a critical gap in our understanding of the experiences of CLTs, particularly in private schools, within the Thai educational landscape. The absence of comprehensive studies examining their professional roles, cultural experiences, and the influence of cultural factors on their lives creates a distinct void that this research seeks to fill.

The research objectives and questions outlined in this introduction serve as our guiding compass. They drive us to delve deep into the professional and personal realms of CLTs' lives, to scrutinize the influence of cultural factors, and to unearth the broader impact of these factors on their experiences.

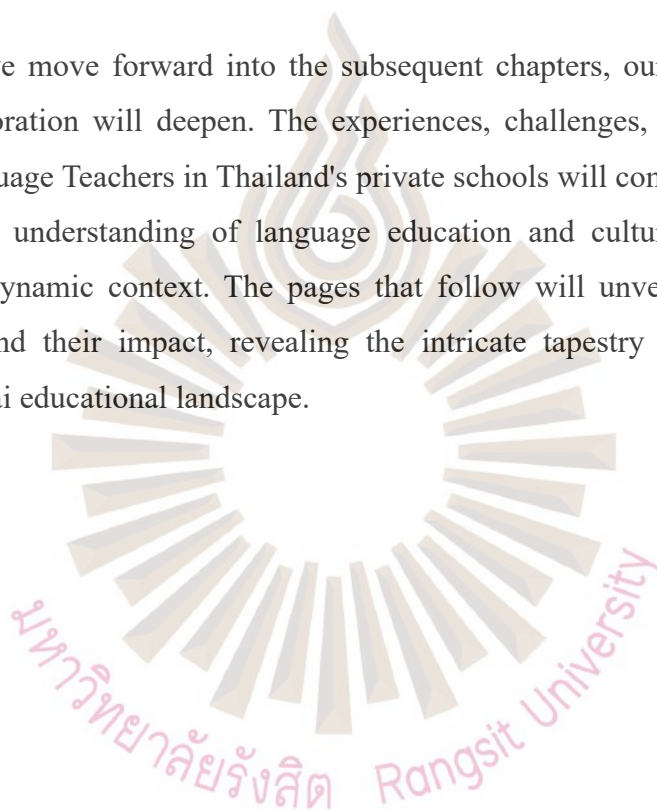
The conceptual framework, grounded in Byrme's Cultural Dimensions Theory, provides a structured lens through which we will examine the intricate interplay between culture, language education, and personal experiences. It equips us with the tools to comprehend the complex roles of CLTs and the dynamic cultural dynamics at play.

The significance of this study is underscored by its potential contributions. Not only does it offer insights into the experiences of CLTs, shedding light on their unique roles within the Thai context, but it also highlights the pivotal role of cultural factors in shaping their professional and personal lives, thus fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Acknowledging the limitations of this study, from sample constraints to methodological considerations, serves as a reminder of the scope within which we operate. These limitations, although present, do not diminish the importance of the insights we aim to glean.

Finally, the definitions of key terms offer clarity in our discourse, ensuring that we communicate effectively and precisely throughout this research endeavor.

As we move forward into the subsequent chapters, our focus will sharpen, and our exploration will deepen. The experiences, challenges, and contributions of Chinese Language Teachers in Thailand's private schools will come into sharper focus, enriching our understanding of language education and cultural exchange in this diverse and dynamic context. The pages that follow will unveil their stories, their aspirations, and their impact, revealing the intricate tapestry of their experiences within the Thai educational landscape.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The realm of international education is marked by a rich tapestry of cultural interactions, nuanced teaching experiences, and diverse educational methodologies (Vokhidov, 2023). At the heart of this vibrant landscape are expatriate teachers, whose unique experiences in foreign educational settings provide invaluable insights into cross-cultural dynamics in education. This literature review, forming the second chapter of the thesis, aims to summarise the current research status and find the current research gap.

This chapter is structured to systematically dissect and analyze the existing body of literature pertinent to the study's objectives. The discussion begins with a contextual backdrop, laying the groundwork for understanding the specific environment in which these expatriate teachers operate. Following this, a detailed examination of Byrme's cultural dimensions theory is presented, setting the theoretical framework that underpins this study.

The core of the review delves into the heart of the matter and challenges, both professional and personal, that Chinese expatriate teachers face in Thailand. This exploration is not just limited to surface-level difficulties but extends to an in-depth analysis of cultural factors that influence their daily lives and teaching experiences. Furthermore, the review embarks on a journey through the lived experiences of these teachers, aiming to capture the essence of their narratives in teaching Chinese to Thai students. This phenomenological approach provides a platform to deeply understand their stories, beyond mere statistics and generalizations.

An essential part of this exploration is understanding how these teachers navigate and come to terms with the cultural differences they encounter. As such,

strategies for coping with cultural differences and adapting to new educational and cultural environments are scrutinized. This includes an examination of both individual adaptation mechanisms and institutional support systems.

Throughout this chapter, the literature is not only reviewed but also critically evaluated, highlighting gaps, and drawing connections between various studies. This serves to contextualize the research within the broader academic discourse, providing a foundation upon which this study builds its arguments and findings. In sum, chapter two is more than a mere aggregation of existing knowledge; it is a carefully curated analysis that seeks to enrich our understanding of the lived experiences of Chinese expatriate teachers in Thailand.

## **2.1 Research Context**

The integration of Chinese language education in Thailand reflects a confluence of historical, cultural, and economic factors (Draper, 2019). Historically, the Chinese diaspora has played a significant role in Thailand (Huang, 2014), leading to the early introduction of Chinese language courses in some schools. In recent decades, the surge in China's global economic prominence has further spurred interest in Chinese language proficiency, not just as a cultural asset but as a pragmatic tool in global business and diplomacy. Educational policies in Thailand have progressively adapted to this trend, with an increasing number of schools, particularly private institutions, incorporating Chinese language programs into their curriculum. This shift signifies not only a response to global economic patterns but also an acknowledgment of the cultural and linguistic diversity within Thailand itself.

Chinese teachers in Thai private schools come from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds (Duangmanee & Waluyo, 2023). They are typically native speakers of Mandarin and possess a range of qualifications, from bachelor's degrees in education or Chinese language studies to higher degrees and teaching certifications. These educators often face the dual challenge of adapting both to a new cultural environment and to the specific educational contexts of Thai private schools. Their

teaching methodologies, influenced by their training and cultural background, may differ significantly from the pedagogical approaches prevalent in Thailand. This diversity presents both challenges and opportunities for the educational institutions that employ them, as well as for the students who engage in learning the Chinese language through their instruction.

Immigration teachers, such as those from China teaching in Thailand, play a crucial role in the dynamics of international education (Bunnell & Poole, 2022). They act as conduits for cross-cultural exchange and are pivotal in promoting global understanding and intercultural competence among students. In teaching a language, they also impart knowledge of the culture, values, and societal norms of their home country, enriching the learning experience far beyond linguistic skills. Their presence in schools contributes to the internationalization of the curriculum, preparing students for the increasingly globalized world. Furthermore, they bring diverse teaching practices and perspectives that can invigorate pedagogical approaches within schools, potentially leading to educational innovations and improved learning outcomes.

In summary, the presence of Chinese teachers in Thai private schools is a testament to the dynamic nature of education in an interconnected world. Their role goes beyond language instruction, contributing to the shaping of a more culturally aware and globally oriented generation of students. This context sets the stage for a deeper exploration into the lived experiences of these educators, a task to which the subsequent sections of this literature review are dedicated.

## **2.2 Theoretical Basis**

Byram's Cultural Dimensions Theory is a framework for understanding cultural differences across countries (Koleśnik, 2013). Byram initially identified four dimensions: Attitudes, Knowledge, Skills of Interpreting and Relating, Skills of Discovery and Interaction, and Critical Cultural Awareness.

These dimensions provide a systematic approach to categorize and compare cultural norms and values.

### **2.2.1 Attitude**

Attitude refers to the extent to which less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally (Ghosh, 2011). In high power distance cultures, hierarchy and unequal power distribution are seen as natural and even beneficial. Such societies often emphasize respect for authority and seniority. In contrast, low power distance cultures advocate for egalitarianism and challenge authority, promoting flatter organizational structures and more participative decision-making processes. Understanding this dimension is crucial for expatriate teachers to navigate the power dynamics inherent in educational settings, particularly in the teacher-student relationship and institutional hierarchies.

### **2.2.2 Knowledge**

This dimension describes the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups (Triandis, 2018). Individualistic societies prioritize personal achievements and individual rights, promoting independence and self-expression. In contrast, collectivist societies emphasize group goals, harmony, and interdependence, where individuals are expected to conform to the norms of their social group. Expatriate teachers must understand the individualism or collectivism of their host country to effectively interact with students and colleagues, tailoring their teaching and communication styles accordingly.

### **2.2.3 Skills of Interpreting and Relating**

Skills of Interpreting and Relating pertains to the distribution of emotional roles between the genders (Stets & Burke, 2000). Masculine cultures value competitiveness, assertiveness, ambition, and the accumulation of wealth and material possessions. Feminine cultures, on the other hand, value cooperation, modesty, caring

for the weak, and quality of life. This dimension helps expatriate teachers comprehend the underlying values influencing student behaviors and expectations regarding competition, success, and the roles of men and women in society.

#### **2.2.4 Skills of Discovery and Interaction**

Skills of Discovery and Interaction deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity (Shane, 1995). Cultures with high Uncertainty Avoidance prefer clear rules and guidelines and tend to be less tolerant of unorthodox behavior or ideas. Low Uncertainty Avoidance cultures are more accepting of differing opinions and are more flexible and adaptable. This dimension influences classroom management and curriculum design, as teachers from different cultures may have varying approaches to handling ambiguity and uncertainty in educational settings.

#### **2.2.5 Critical Cultural Awareness**

Critical Cultural Awareness versus Short-Term Normative Orientation reflects a society's time horizon and attitude toward time, persistence, and respect for tradition (Bearden, Money, & Nevins, 2006; Byrme & Minkov, 2010). Long-term oriented cultures emphasize future rewards, valuing persistence, perseverance, saving, and adapting to changing circumstances. Short-term oriented cultures value traditions and the current state, focusing on achieving quick results. Understanding this dimension can aid expatriate teachers in aligning their teaching methods with the temporal values and expectations of their students and the educational system.

Byram's model is particularly relevant to expatriate teachers, who navigate cross-cultural environments in their professional lives. Understanding the cultural dimensions can assist expatriate teachers in comprehending their own cultural biases and those of the host country. For instance, a Chinese teacher in Thailand may encounter differences in Power Distance, as hierarchical structures in Thai schools may differ from those in China. Similarly, the Individualism vs. Collectivism dimension can help expatriate teachers understand the group dynamics and classroom

behavior in the host country. By appreciating these cultural dimensions, expatriate teachers can adapt their teaching methods and interactions to be more effective and sensitive to the cultural context of their students.

While Byram's model has been groundbreaking in cross-cultural psychology and management, it is not without criticism. One major critique is that it can oversimplify cultural dynamics and lead to stereotyping. Cultures are not monolithic, and there can be significant intra-country variations. Furthermore, Byram's data was primarily derived from a corporate context, raising questions about its applicability to other domains such as education. In response to these critiques, subsequent researchers have adapted and expanded Byram's model. These adaptations include incorporating additional dimensions, applying the model to diverse contexts, and emphasizing the fluidity and complexity of culture beyond the original dimensions. Such adaptations make Byram's model more nuanced and applicable to the dynamic and varied settings in which expatriate teachers work.

This section provides an essential theoretical foundation for understanding the cultural contexts in which Chinese expatriate teachers operate in Thailand. The insights gleaned from Byram's model and its critiques are instrumental in framing the subsequent exploration of the lived experiences of these teachers in a culturally diverse educational environment.

### **2.3 Challenges Faced by Immigration Teachers**

The professional landscape for expatriate teachers is often fraught with challenges unique to their status as foreign educators (Sherman, 2023). A predominant issue is language barriers, which extend beyond just the difference in native tongues. It encompasses the challenge of teaching a subject in a language that may not be the first language of the students, as well as understanding the educational jargon and administrative language of the host country. Additionally, differing teaching methodologies pose a significant challenge (Prince & Felder, 2006). Expatriate teachers may find that their teaching styles, rooted in their cultural and educational backgrounds, may not align with the pedagogical expectations

and practices in the host country. These disparities can impact classroom management, student engagement, and overall teaching effectiveness.

Beyond professional hurdles, expatriate teachers face a myriad of personal challenges (Simon-Maeda, 2004). Cultural adjustment emerges as a prominent issue, involving the process of adapting to the host country's cultural norms, values, and lifestyle. This adjustment process can be complex and emotionally taxing, often leading to a phenomenon known as 'culture shock'. Another critical personal challenge is social isolation. Expatriate teachers might struggle to form meaningful connections within the host community or with colleagues, leading to feelings of loneliness and alienation. These personal challenges not only affect the well-being of the teachers but can also have a profound impact on their professional performance and their overall experience in the host country.

Comparative studies provide valuable insights into how expatriate teachers' experiences vary across different cultural contexts. Such research can highlight the relative impact of various cultural dimensions on the expatriate teaching experience (Hamdan-Alghamdi, 2014). For instance, teachers in high power distance societies may face different challenges in classroom authority compared to those in low power distance cultures. Similarly, the level of individualism or collectivism in a society can influence classroom interactions and teacher-student relationships. These comparative studies are crucial in understanding the interplay between cultural contexts and the expatriate teaching experience, offering a more nuanced view of the challenges faced by teachers across diverse global settings.

In summary, expatriate teachers encounter a range of professional and personal challenges that are deeply influenced by the cultural context of their host country. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing strategies to support expatriate teachers, enabling them to thrive professionally and personally in their roles as educators in a foreign land.

## **2.4 Cultural Factors Affecting Lived Experiences**

### **2.4.1 Analysis of Cultural Shocks and Adaptation Processes**

Cultural shock is a common experience for many expatriate teachers, characterized by the psychological disorientation that occurs when transitioning from one cultural environment to another (Furnham, 2019). It typically involves a series of phases: initial euphoria or excitement, followed by frustration and anxiety as differences become more apparent, gradual adjustment, and eventually adaptation. This adaptation process is crucial for expatriate teachers to effectively navigate and integrate into the host culture. Understanding the nuances of cultural shock, including its symptoms and progression, is vital for developing effective coping strategies. These strategies often involve learning about the host culture, developing new communication skills, and finding a supportive social network.

### **2.4.2 Role of Cultural Intelligence in Adaptation**

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) plays a pivotal role in how successfully expatriate teachers adapt to their new environment (Devitt, 2014). CQ refers to an individual's ability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings. It encompasses four dimensions: cognitive (understanding cultural norms and practices), metacognitive (awareness and control over one's cultural assumptions), motivational (interest and confidence in functioning within different cultures), and behavioral (ability to adapt behavior to different cultural settings). Expatriate teachers with high cultural intelligence are better equipped to interpret unfamiliar behaviors, adjust their teaching styles to meet diverse student needs, and navigate the complexities of living and working in a different cultural context.

### **2.4.3 Impact of Cultural Factors on Daily Living and Professional Practices**

Cultural factors significantly impact both the daily living and professional practices of expatriate teachers (Hamdan Alghamdi, 2014). Daily living aspects include adjusting to new social norms, dietary changes, differing attitudes towards time and punctuality, and varied leisure activities. Professionally, teachers must adapt

to different educational systems, classroom dynamics, and expectations regarding teacher-student interactions. The degree of formality in communication, attitudes towards hierarchy and authority in the classroom, and approaches to student assessment and discipline can vary widely between cultures. These cultural factors can significantly affect not only the effectiveness of teaching but also the overall job satisfaction and well-being of expatriate teachers.

In summary, the living experiences of expatriate teachers are deeply influenced by cultural factors. An understanding of cultural shocks, the development of cultural intelligence, and an awareness of the impact of cultural factors on everyday and professional life are crucial for the successful integration and adaptation of expatriate teachers in their host countries. This understanding not only benefits the teachers themselves but also enhances the educational experiences of their students, fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

## **2.5 Lived Experiences of Teaching in a Cross-Cultural Environment**

### **2.5.1 Phenomenological Studies on Expatriate Teachers' Experiences**

A phenomenological approach offers an in-depth exploration into the lived experiences of expatriate teachers, providing valuable insights into their daily realities within a cross-cultural context. This methodology focuses on understanding the essence of these experiences from the teachers' perspectives, capturing the subjective and often complex emotional, cognitive, and social dynamics they navigate. Through this lens, researchers can delve deeply into the personal and professional lives of immigration teachers, uncovering the nuances of their experiences in foreign educational environments.

Empirical studies utilizing phenomenological methods often reveal the rich, multifaceted nature of immigration teachers' experience, encompassing both the challenges and the rewards of teaching in a culturally diverse setting. Key themes frequently emerging from this research include the process of cultural adaptation, the

development of professional identity in a foreign context, the impact of cultural differences on teaching practices, and the emotional journey of coping with separation from familiar social networks (Afana, Tremblay, Ghannam, Ronsbo, & Veronese, 2020).

One significant finding in phenomenological research is the transformational aspect of these experiences. Many immigration teachers report profound personal and professional growth as a result of their exposure to different cultural and educational environments (Mantel, 2022). This growth often entails enhanced intercultural competencies, increased adaptability, and a deeper understanding of global educational disparities and commonalities. Studies by Aldrup, Carstensen, & Klusmann (2022) and Bartelds, Savenije, & Van Boxtel (2020) also highlight how these experiences contribute to teachers' development of empathy and a global perspective.

Moreover, such studies underscore the resilience of immigration teachers as they navigate linguistic barriers, adjust teaching methodologies to suit diverse student populations, and bridge cultural gaps (Hunter-Johnson, 2022). The narratives captured through phenomenological research provide a vivid portrayal of the highs and lows, the successes and struggles, and the continuous learning and unlearning that constitute the life of an expatriate teacher (Livermore, 2022).

In summary, phenomenological studies into the experiences of immigration teachers in cross-cultural environments offer rich, nuanced insights that transcend traditional research methodologies. They shed light on the subjective, lived reality of teachers, providing an invaluable perspective for educational policymakers, school administrators, and future immigration educators. These insights not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the immigration teaching experience but also inform strategies to support and enhance the effectiveness and well-being of teachers working in multicultural settings. The comprehensive understanding gleaned from these studies is crucial for developing supportive frameworks and policies that can aid in the professional development and personal well-being of international educators.

### 2.5.2 Specific Challenges of Teaching Chinese to Thai Students

The task of teaching Chinese to Thai students presents a unique set of challenges, as highlighted by phenomenological studies focusing on the experiences of Chinese immigration teachers in Thailand. These studies unearth the specific obstacles and nuances associated with this particular cross-cultural educational encounter.

One prominent challenge is the linguistic and phonetic differences between the Chinese and Thai languages. Chinese, with its tonal nature and character-based writing system, poses significant learning difficulties for Thai students, who are accustomed to a non-tonal, alphabetic language. Immigration teachers often have to innovate and adapt their teaching methodologies to overcome these linguistic barriers effectively.

Another challenge stems from differing educational expectations and learning styles. Thai students may be used to a certain pedagogical approach, which may differ from the traditional teaching styles of Chinese educators. This disparity can lead to a mismatch in classroom dynamics, requiring teachers to modify their instructional strategies to engage and motivate their students effectively.

Cultural differences in classroom behavior and teacher-student interactions also emerge as a significant challenge. For instance, the concept of 'face' and respect for authority, prevalent in both Chinese and Thai cultures, can manifest in different ways, affecting classroom participation, feedback mechanisms, and the overall learning environment.

Additionally, these teachers often grapple with the responsibility of not just teaching a language but also serving as cultural ambassadors. They find themselves introducing and interpreting cultural nuances and societal norms associated with the Chinese language, which requires a deep understanding of both Thai and Chinese cultures.

Phenomenological research in this area often reveals the creative strategies employed by Chinese teachers to bridge these gaps. These include the use of

multimedia resources, interactive language games, culturally relevant examples, and collaborative learning techniques. The studies also shed light on the personal and professional development of these teachers as they navigate these challenges, often leading to enhanced cross-cultural communication skills, a deeper understanding of their own teaching practices, and a profound appreciation of cultural diversity.

In conclusion, teaching Chinese to Thai students encompasses a spectrum of specific challenges that require cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical adaptability. Phenomenological studies in this area not only illuminate the complexities of this unique educational scenario but also contribute valuable insights into the development of more effective teaching practices and cross-cultural understanding in the field of language education. Specific challenges of teaching Chinese to Thai students.

### **2.5.3 Case Studies or Narratives Highlighting Personal Experiences**

Case studies and personal narratives provide a vivid and intimate glimpse into the lived experiences of expatriate teachers, offering a detailed understanding of their everyday realities in cross-cultural environments. These qualitative approaches bring forth the individual stories behind the broader phenomena, revealing the human aspects of teaching in a foreign culture.

A significant number of these narratives focus on the initial transition phase, highlighting the blend of excitement and apprehension as teachers navigate new cultural landscapes. They often recount initial encounters with language barriers, unfamiliar educational practices, and the process of adjusting to different social and professional norms. For instance, a case study might describe a Chinese teacher's first day in a Thai classroom, detailing the challenges of communication and the strategies employed to connect with students.

Other narratives delve deeper into the ongoing journey of cultural integration and professional adaptation. They might explore the evolving relationships with students and colleagues, the gradual understanding and appreciation of local customs,

and the development of new teaching methodologies that resonate with the host culture. These stories often reveal moments of breakthrough and personal growth, as well as instances of misunderstanding and frustration.

Several case studies also highlight the broader impact of these experiences on teachers' identities and worldviews. They reflect on how living and working in a different culture reshapes one's perceptions of education, communication, and community. For example, a narrative might explore how a teacher's experience in Thailand leads to a reevaluation of their teaching philosophy or a newfound appreciation for cultural diversity.

Furthermore, these personal accounts often discuss the coping mechanisms and support systems that teachers develop, such as forming networks with other expatriates, engaging in local community activities, or maintaining cultural practices from their home country. These aspects provide insights into how teachers sustain their well-being and professional enthusiasm amidst the challenges of expatriate life.

In summary, case studies and narratives offer a rich, contextually grounded perspective on the lived experiences of expatriate teachers. They not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of teaching in a cross-cultural setting but also serve as valuable resources for policy development, teacher training, and support mechanisms aimed at enhancing the expatriate teaching experience.

## **2.6 Coping with Cultural Differences**

### **2.6.1 Strategies and Models for Cultural Adaptation**

In the face of cultural differences, expatriate teachers employ various strategies and models to adapt effectively to their new environments. These approaches are vital in facilitating a smoother transition and enhancing the overall teaching and living experience in a foreign culture.

Cultural Learning, one of the primary strategies involves actively learning about the host culture. This includes understanding local customs, social norms, language nuances, and educational practices. Teachers often engage in formal language classes, cultural workshops, and community events to deepen their cultural understanding.

**Building Cultural Intelligence (CQ):** Developing cultural intelligence is key to successful adaptation. This involves enhancing one's ability to interpret and react appropriately in different cultural contexts. Teachers work on improving their CQ by being reflective about their cultural biases, seeking diverse cultural interactions, and being open to different perspectives and practices.

**Interpersonal Communication Skills** means the effective communication transcends linguistic proficiency, encompassing the ability to interpret non-verbal cues, understand context, and adapt communication styles to fit the cultural setting. Teachers often refine their communication skills to become more effective in cross-cultural interactions, both inside and outside the classroom.

**Pedagogical Flexibility** aims to adapt teaching methodologies to align with the learning styles and expectations of students in the host country is crucial. This may involve integrating more group work in collectivist cultures or adopting a more direct teaching style in cultures that favor explicit instruction.

**Support Networks** refers to build a support network with fellow expatriates, local colleagues, and community members can provide emotional support and practical advice. These networks can be invaluable sources of information and resources for navigating cultural challenges.

**Stress Management and Self-Care** indicates the importance of recognizing and managing the stress that can come with cultural adaptation. Teachers often adopt self-care practices, maintain hobbies, and seek professional support if needed, to manage the emotional toll of adapting to a new culture.

Cultural Integration Models means that there are several theoretical models that guide cultural adaptation. For instance, the U-Curve and W-Curve models suggest that cultural adjustment follows a series of stages from initial excitement to a low point of cultural shock, and then gradual adjustment and comfort. Understanding these models can help teachers recognize and normalize their experiences.

In summary, coping with cultural differences is a multifaceted process that requires a combination of cultural learning, development of cultural intelligence, communication skills, pedagogical flexibility, building support networks, and effective stress management. By employing these strategies and models, expatriate teachers can better navigate the complexities of cultural adaptation, enhancing their professional effectiveness and personal well-being in the host country.

### **2.6.2 Role of Support Systems**

Support systems play a critical role in assisting expatriate teachers to cope with the challenges posed by cultural differences. These systems can be formal or informal and come from various sources:

**Institutional Support:** Schools and educational institutions often provide structured support, which may include orientation programs, language classes, cultural training, mentoring systems, and professional development workshops. This type of support is designed to facilitate smoother transitions into the new educational and cultural environment.

**Peer Networks:** Relationships with other expatriate and local teachers can offer invaluable support. These networks provide opportunities for sharing experiences, strategies, and resources. Peer support can also offer a sense of community and belonging, which is crucial in overcoming feelings of isolation and alienation.

**Local Community Engagement:** Interaction with the local community allows teachers to immerse themselves in the culture, practice the language, and develop a

deeper understanding of local customs and values. Community engagement can range from participating in local events to volunteer work.

**Online Forums and Social Media:** Digital platforms provide an additional layer of support, especially in connecting with broader expatriate communities and accessing resources. Online forums and social media groups can be sources of advice, encouragement, and information sharing.

**Professional Counseling and Health Services:** Access to counseling and health services is important, especially for dealing with issues like culture shock and stress. Some institutions provide access to counseling services, or teachers may seek these services independently.

**Family and Friends:** Ongoing support from family and friends, whether in the host country or back home, is crucial for emotional stability and morale. Technology has made keeping in touch easier, helping to maintain these vital connections.

### **2.6.3 Long-term Effects of Cultural Adjustment on Teaching Practices and Personal Growth**

The process of cultural adjustment, though challenging, can have profoundly positive long-term effects on both professional practices and personal development:

Through the process of adaptation, teachers often develop more flexible and innovative teaching strategies, becoming more responsive to the diverse needs of their students. They may incorporate new cultural perspectives into their curriculum, making their teaching more inclusive and relevant.

Continuous exposure to and interaction with different cultures enhance a teacher's cultural sensitivity and competence. This growth often leads to more effective communication and stronger relationships with students and colleagues from diverse backgrounds.

Navigating through the challenges of cultural adjustment often leads to significant personal development. Teachers may find they have become more resilient, open-minded, and adaptable. They often develop a deeper understanding of themselves and a broader perspective on the world.

The skills and experiences gained from working in a multicultural environment can be valuable for career advancement. These include language skills, cross-cultural communication skills, and a demonstrated ability to work in diverse settings.

Living and working in a different culture can profoundly change one's worldview. Teachers often report a greater appreciation for diversity, a deeper understanding of global issues, and a reevaluation of their own cultural assumptions.

In conclusion, support systems are essential in facilitating the cultural adjustment of expatriate teachers, and the long-term effects of this adjustment process can be immensely beneficial, both professionally and personally. The journey, while fraught with challenges, offers an opportunity for significant growth and development.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The overview of Chinese language education in Thailand and the profile of Chinese teachers in Thai private schools set the stage for understanding the specific environment and demographics of these educators. Byram's Cultural Dimensions Theory offered a foundational framework for analyzing cultural influences on teaching and personal experiences. The exploration of the challenges faced by expatriate teachers, both professionally and personally, highlighted the common hurdles such as language barriers, teaching methodologies, cultural adjustment, and social isolation.

Studies focusing on the lived experiences of these teachers, including phenomenological research and case narratives, brought forward the personal and emotional aspects of their journeys. The discussion on coping strategies and models

for cultural adaptation, the role of support systems, and the long-term effects of cultural adjustment provided insights into how these teachers manage and benefit from their experiences.

The themes and studies reviewed here are directly aligned with the research aims, which include understanding the professional and personal challenges of these teachers, identifying the cultural factors affecting their experiences, discussing their lived experiences in the Thai context, and ascertaining how they come to terms with cultural differences. The literature provides a solid foundation for this study, enabling a deeper understanding of the phenomena and guiding the subsequent empirical research.

In conclusion, this literature review serves as a critical cornerstone for the thesis, offering both a theoretical backdrop and practical insights into the experiences of expatriate teachers in a culturally diverse educational landscape. It paves the way for further research and discussion, contributing to the broader field of international education and intercultural studies.



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

On the basis of the research purpose, the chapter presents details of research methodology. It involves five parts in this chapter. The part of research design includes the research method and the reasons why the study selects this kind of research method. In addition, it presents the research population and research samples, research instruments, research ethics clearance, research data collection and analysis in detail.

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm

This study adopted a phenomenological approach, which provides a comprehensive framework for examining the experiences of Chinese language teachers in Thai private schools. The phenomenological approach offers distinctive methodologies for capturing and comprehending the intricacies behind lived experiences, illuminating aspects that remain elusive to other research paradigms.

Ontologically, phenomenology contends that reality is perceived through the subjective experiences of individuals, emphasizing the uniqueness and complexity of personal perceptions and interpretations of the world (Creswell, 2013; Van Manen, 1990). This perspective allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective realities of teachers, acknowledging that their experiences are constructed through their interactions with their environment (Moustakas, 1994; Giorgi, 2009). From an epistemological standpoint, phenomenology focuses on the consciousness and intentionality behind individuals' experiences, suggesting that knowledge is derived from the way people engage with and make sense of their surroundings (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Van Manen, 2016). This approach underscores the importance of understanding the lived experiences of teachers to grasp the essence of

their professional and personal realities in a cross-cultural context.

Methodologically, the phenomenological approach advocates for qualitative techniques such as detailed interviews and focus group discussions to elicit rich, descriptive narratives that reveal the depth of participants' experiences (Van Manen, 1990). This qualitative method is chosen for its ability to provide a deep, nuanced understanding of the intricate experiences of Chinese language teachers in Thailand, capturing the essence of their professional challenges and personal adjustments within a foreign educational landscape.

The justification for employing phenomenology in this study is bolstered by its proven effectiveness in educational research, especially in revealing the deep, nuanced aspects of teaching and learning experiences (Smith et al., 2009). For example, Sailabada and Soontornwipast (2023) utilized phenomenology to explore the experiences of Thai primary school students in an English Program at a university demonstration school. Similarly, Rex Pedrosa Cabiladas (2020) applied phenomenological methods to understand the multifaceted experiences of Filipino teachers in Thailand, highlighting themes such as systematic assessment challenges, class size issues, salary discrepancies, student behavior and language barriers, and pedagogical approaches.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This investigation began with a group focus interview, serving as an initial step to collect broad insights and identify prevalent themes concerning the professional and personal challenges encountered by these educators.

Subsequent to the group focus interview, individual semi-structured interviews were employed to probe deeper into the participants' personal and professional lives. This bifurcated approach ensured an exhaustive exploration of the lived experiences of Chinese language teachers, facilitating a nuanced comprehension of their daily realities. The semi-structured format of the individual interviews offered the necessary flexibility, allowing the researcher to delve into specific areas of interest

that emerged during the focus group discussions, while also permitting new themes to spontaneously arise from the participants' narratives (Seidman, 2013).

In order to capture more implicit and “invisible” details of their real lives within institutional context, this study also made some field notes through classroom observation after getting the official permission.

This methodological framework is crucial in capturing the intricacy and profundity of the teachers' experiences, aiming to shed light on the confluence of professional and personal dimensions of their lives in Thai private schools. Through this phenomenological exploration, this study endeavors to augment the understanding of the dynamics influencing the experiences of Chinese language teachers in foreign settings, underscoring the implications for educational practices and policies in a cross-cultural milieu (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The data collection process of this study was meticulously structured into two sequential phases, aimed at capturing the depth and breadth of the lived experiences of Chinese language teachers in Thai a private school. The initial phase commenced with a group focus interview, designed to foster a collaborative and reflective environment where participants can share their collective experiences. This session, conducted in Mandarin to ensure comfort and clarity in communication, was scheduled to last approximately 90 minutes. During this time, discussions revolved around pre-defined themes such as professional challenges, personal experiences inside and outside the institutional environment, and overall teaching experiences, as outlined in the proposed group focus interview table. To accurately capture the richness of the conversation, audio recordings were utilized, with explicit consent obtained from all participants to adhere to ethical standards. Therefore, Table 3-1 outlines the process of group focus interview.

Following the group focus interview, the study progressed to the second phase, consisting of individual semi-structured interviews. Each interview, also conducted in Mandarin, was designed to last approximately 60 minutes, allowing for an in-depth exploration of each participant's unique experiences and perspectives. This phase was structured around a series of predetermined topics, including background information, professional and personal challenges, and lived teaching experiences, detailed in the outline for semi-structured interviews, more details about the semi-structured interview please check appendix part. The use of audio recording during these interviews, contingent upon participant consent, ensures that no detail is overlooked, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of the data.

In addition to interviews, this study incorporated classroom observations as a supplementary method to collect detailed data. After securing the necessary permissions, I conducted observations for each teacher involved in the study, observing each twice for periods of 90 minutes. These observations allowed for real-time collection of data on teaching methods, classroom interactions, and the educational environment. During these sessions, extensive field notes were taken to record observations, capturing both the overt and nuanced aspects of the teaching dynamics and teacher-student interactions.

Table 3.1 Outline of a group focus interview

Process	Description
Introduction	Introduce the study's goals, emphasizing the collective input's value. Explain confidentiality, voluntary participation, and recording consent.
Setting the Scene	Outline the discussion flow and establish group norms for a respectful and productive dialogue.
Shared Background Exploration	Participants introduce themselves and share their teaching journeys in Thailand, establishing a base of common experiences.

Table 3.1 Outline of a group focus interview (Cont.)

Process	Description
Overview of Challenges	Facilitate a discussion on broad professional and personal challenges faced, setting the stage for deeper individual exploration later on.
Collective Insights on Teaching	Encourage sharing of teaching experiences, strategies, and student interactions to identify key themes for further investigation.
Reflections on Professional Identity	Discuss how their experiences have influenced their identity as educators in a cross-cultural setting.
Preparation for Individual Interview	Briefly introduce the next phase of individual interviews, linking it to the focus group discussion to prepare participants for deeper exploration.
Conclusion	Summarize key points, thank participants, outline next steps, and address final questions or comments.
Operational Debriefing	Offer a session for participants to reflect on the discussion and provide feedback on the process.

Source: Researcher

Overall, the data collection process is instrumental in providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges and experiences of these educators, forming the foundation for a comprehensive analysis aligned with the study's objectives.

### 3.4 Population and Samples

#### 3.4.1 Definition of Population

In this study, the population refers to Chinese language teachers employed in a private school in Thailand. This specific group was selected due to their unique position as expatriate educators facing distinct cultural and professional challenges in a cross-cultural environment. These individuals represent a diverse range of experiences in terms of age, gender, teaching experience, educational background, and

cultural adaptation processes. Understanding the characteristics and experiences of this population is crucial to achieving the objectives of the study.

### 3.4.2 Sampling Method

To gain nuanced insights into the experiences of Chinese language teachers in Thailand, this study utilized a purposive sampling strategy. This method was chosen to select participants who have firsthand experience with the subject matter, ensuring the collected data is both relevant and rich in detail. Aiming for a sample size of 5 teachers strikes a balance between achieving a variety of perspectives and allowing for a thorough examination of each teacher's unique experience, facilitating a deep understanding of both shared themes and individual differences within the group.

### 3.4.3 Criteria for Selection

Participants were selected based on the following criteria: They were currently employed as Chinese language teachers in a private school in Thailand and had at least one year of teaching experience in Thailand, to ensure familiarity with the educational and cultural environment. In this regard, five participants were purposively selected. The last criterion was their willingness to participate in the study and share personal experiences.

Table 3.2 presents the basic information of participants.

Table 3.2 Essential information of participants

Number	Gender	Age	Education	Working experience
1	Male	35	Master's in Education	5 years
2	Female	30	Bachelor's in Chinese	6 years
3	Male	40	PhD in Linguistics	10 years
4	Female	28	Master's in Linguistics	3 years
5	Male	25	Bachelor's in Education	2 years

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, a widely employed analytical method in qualitative research, was also utilized in this study. This method offers a versatile approach that facilitates a comprehensive and nuanced portrayal of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Since the focus group primarily provides pre-themes for the next phase of data collection, this study exclusively analyzed data from the semi-structured interviews using thematic analysis.

Three steps were encompassed in thematic analysis method. The initial phase involves the verbatim transcription of interview recordings. This step is pivotal in anchoring the analysis to the actual data, thereby preserving the authenticity of the participants' responses (Riessman, 1993). Subsequently, the researcher engaged deeply with the data through repeated readings of the transcripts, recording preliminary ideas and observations. This immersion is critical for acquiring a thorough understanding of both the content and context of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The next step was the systematic coding of the data. This entailed the creation of concise codes that highlighted significant aspects of the data pertinent to the research questions. This iterative process facilitated the emergence of discernible patterns within the data (Saldaña, 2015). These codes were then aggregated into potential themes, involving an examination of the codes and assembled data to unearth substantial overarching patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Subsequently, a review and refinement of these themes followed. This phase included verifying the coherence of the themes in relation to the coded excerpts and the entire dataset, ensuring an accurate representation of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Each theme was then meticulously defined and named, offering an in-depth analysis of each theme and the collective narrative they convey. This stage necessitated a profound and continuous analysis to fine-tune the details of each theme and the overarching story (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The concluding stage encompassed the integration of the analytical narrative with illustrative data extracts, situating the analysis within the context of existing literature and the research questions.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

To uphold ethical standards, all participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, methods, and the use of data. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any point without any consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, with pseudonyms used in place of real names and any identifying information being altered or omitted in the study's findings.

The population and sampling strategy outlined above were designed to provide rich, detailed insights into the experiences of Chinese language teachers in private schools in Thailand. By carefully selecting participants who met specific criteria and ensuring ethical standards in recruitment and data collection, this study aimed to contribute meaningful and authentic perspectives to the field of international education and cross-cultural studies.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the findings of a qualitative phenomenological analysis. It opens with an introduction to the coding results, setting the stage to address the three research questions derived from these outcomes. And then, this study systematically links the findings to each question, illustrating how the themes emerged from the coding process provide answers. Finally, the section concludes by summarizing the significant discoveries uncovered in this study, emphasizing their implications and relevance.

#### **4.1 The Essence of Lived Experience**

Drawing on the integration of Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, this study employed a deductive coding approach, outlined in Table 4.1, which methodically dissected the data into five distinct themes through a three-step coding process. Data were gathered through 11 semi-structured interview questions designed to explore the lived experiences of the teachers comprehensively.

##### **Theme 1: Professional Identity amidst Collectivism**

This theme investigated how teachers reconciled their individual goals and pedagogies with the collective norms and policies of their institutions. It starts from observing personal experiences (initial codes), groups them into discussions on collaboration, autonomy, and conformity (axial codes), and culminates in understanding how individual identity is shaped within a collective framework (selective code).

### Theme 2: Cultural Confluence in Teaching

This theme explores the interplay between teachers' personal pedagogical approaches and the cultural and institutional expectations they encounter. Initial observations about classroom management and curriculum adaptation lead to broader discussions on how teachers adapt their methods to cultural norms and institutional requirements.

### Theme 3: Adapting to Cross-Cultural Challenges

This theme focuses on the strategies teachers employ to navigate and adapt to cultural differences, initial codes of communication and adaptation strategies build up to a comprehensive view of how teachers embrace educational diversity and adapt teaching practices to meet diverse needs.

### Theme 4: Achieving Equilibrium

This theme examines the balance teachers strive for between their professional responsibilities and personal well-being. It tracks from specific strategies for stress management and boundary setting to overarching strategies that promote a harmonious classroom and personal life balance.

### Theme 5: Adjusting to Institutional Policy

This theme addresses how teachers respond to and navigate the policies of their institutions. Starting from understanding and reacting to these policies, it moves to how teachers comply with or adapt these to fit their teaching styles and ultimately how they manage the integration of these policies with their educational philosophies.

In the context of this study, the absence of themes emerging from the Masculinity vs. Femininity dimension of Byram's cultural theory and the emergence of a new theme, "Adjusting to Institutional Policy" may be attributed to specific cultural and institutional characteristics prevalent in the research setting. The dimension of Masculinity vs. Femininity, which contrasts competitiveness with cooperation and care, might not have been distinctly evident or influential in shaping the professional experiences of Chinese language teachers in Thai private schools, as

other cultural dynamics such as power distance or uncertainty avoidance might dominate the educational culture. Conversely, the new theme of “Adjusting to Institutional Policy” likely emerged due to the significant impact of institutional policies and regulations on daily teaching practices and interactions within the school environment, reflecting a critical area that significantly influences teachers’ professional lives and pedagogical decisions. This suggests that institutional policy, rather than gender dynamics, plays a more pivotal role in shaping the professional landscape these teachers navigate.

In conclusion, the essence of the lived experiences of Chinese transnational teachers in Thai private schools, as revealed through the coding analysis, lies in the dynamic interplay between their professional roles and personal adaptation to a foreign cultural and educational environment. The key themes that emerged—such as balancing individual and collective goals, navigating cultural and linguistic barriers, and negotiating pedagogical autonomy within institutional constraints—highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of their experiences. These themes not only underscore the challenges these teachers face but also reflect their resilience, adaptability, and the strategies they employ to navigate and integrate into the Thai educational landscape. This synthesis of their lived experiences provides a nuanced understanding of the intersection between cultural, professional, and personal dimensions, offering valuable insights into the broader implications for international education and cross-cultural teaching practices.

Table 4.1 The result of coding

Selective Codes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Direct quotations
Balancing Individualism and Collectivism	Integration of Individual and Collective Goals	-Balancing personal teaching goals with team objectives -Instances of personal ambition	- "It's challenging to maintain my personal teaching identity while aligning with the school's vision, but it is necessary to achieve collective

Table 4.1 The result of coding (Cont.)

Selective Codes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Direct quotations
		<p>aligning with school vision</p> <p>-Challenges in maintaining personal teaching identity within a collective culture</p> <p>-Success stories of personal achievements recognized within the team</p>	<p>success."</p> <p>-"My personal ambition to innovate in teaching has found support in the school's objectives, allowing me to contribute uniquely."</p> <p>-"There are times when the collective goals overshadow individual creativity, which can be stifling."</p>
	Professional Collaboration and Individual Advancement	<p>-Examples of mentorship and its impact on professional growth</p> <p>-Conflict resolution strategies among colleagues</p> <p>-Personal professional development initiatives within a collaborative framework</p>	<p>-"Mentorship has been crucial in advancing my career; it provides a balance between learning and contributing to the team's success."</p> <p>-"Resolving conflicts with peers requires diplomacy, often aligning personal goals with the collective needs of the institution."</p> <p>-"I strive to grow professionally by pursuing personal initiatives, even within a framework that emphasizes collaboration."</p>

Table 4.1 The result of coding (Cont.)

Selective Codes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Direct quotations
	Pedagogical Autonomy vs. Institutional Conformity	<p>-Instances of pedagogical innovation within prescribed curricula</p> <p>-Teacher strategies for preserving autonomy in classroom management</p> <p>-Conflicts between personal teaching styles and institutional mandates</p> <p>-Adaptations made by teachers to align with institutional expectations without compromising personal pedagogy</p>	<p>"Despite the constraints, I've found ways to introduce innovative teaching methods that resonate with students."</p> <p>"I have developed strategies to maintain my autonomy in the classroom while still adhering to the institution's policies."</p> <p>"My teaching style often clashes with institutional mandates, requiring constant negotiation and adaptation."</p> <p>"I've had to adapt my teaching methods to align with institutional expectations, but without losing my pedagogical essence."</p>
Cultural Influence on Educational Practice	Power Dynamics and Classroom Management	<p>-Teacher autonomy against institutional policy</p> <p>-Response to institutional hierarchical structures</p>	<p>"Navigating institutional policies often feels like a balancing act between autonomy and compliance."</p> <p>"The hierarchy within the institution dictates much</p>

Table 4.1 The result of coding (Cont.)

Selective Codes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Direct quotations
		-Student-teacher engagement protocols	of the classroom dynamics, impacting my autonomy." -"Engagement with students is structured by the institution, but I've found ways to personalize it within those boundaries."
	Pedagogical Flexibility	-Curriculum adaption to cultural context -Innovations in instructional methods -Balancing standardization with personalization	"Adapting the curriculum to fit cultural contexts is both a challenge and a necessity." -"Introducing new instructional methods within the established curriculum has been key to my success." -"The need to balance standardized curricula with personalized instruction is constant."
Navigation Uncertainty in a Cross-Cultural Setting	Overcoming Cultural Barriers	-Strategies for cross-cultural communication -Adjusting to different educational norms	"Effective cross-cultural communication requires both sensitivity and adaptability." -"Adjusting to new educational norms is an

Table 4.1 The result of coding (Cont.)

Selective Codes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Direct quotations
		-Managing language and communication hurdles	ongoing process that demands flexibility." -"Language barriers are a constant challenge, requiring creative solutions to maintain effective communication."
	Embracing Educational Diversity	Incorporating diverse teaching philosophies -Recognizing and valuing different styles -Fostering an inclusive classroom environment	"Incorporating diverse philosophies enriches the educational experience for both students and teachers." -"Valuing different teaching styles is essential to creating an inclusive environment." -"Fostering inclusivity in the classroom is key to addressing the needs of all students."
	Adapting Teaching Practices	-Tailoring curriculum to meet diverse student needs -Training in intercultural communication skills	"Tailoring the curriculum to meet diverse needs is critical to student success." -"Ongoing training in intercultural communication is vital for navigating the

Table 4.1 The result of coding (Cont.)

Selective Codes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Direct quotations
		-Building empathy and understanding among staff	complexities of a multicultural classroom." -"Building empathy and understanding among staff is essential to creating a harmonious educational environment."
Pursuit of Well-being in an Academic Context	Work-Life Integration	-Balancing teaching responsibilities with personal time -Stress management and self-care practices -Creating boundaries for professional and private life	-"Finding a balance between work and personal life is crucial for maintaining well-being." -"Effective stress management and self-care practices are necessary for sustaining long-term professional health." -"Establishing clear boundaries between professional and private life is essential for personal well-being."
	Cultivating Classroom Harmony	-Positive discipline strategies -Encouraging student autonomy and responsibility -Promoting a positive and	-"Implementing positive discipline strategies fosters a supportive classroom environment." -"Encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning leads to

Table 4.1 The result of coding (Cont.)

Selective Codes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Direct quotations
		supportive classroom culture	greater autonomy and engagement." -"A positive and supportive classroom culture is foundational to student success."
Navigating Policy Constraints	Understanding and Navigating Policy	-Awareness of school policies -Emotional reaction towards school policies -Strategies for navigating policy constraints -Giving feedback for managers about school policies	-"Being aware of school policies is essential for effectively navigating institutional constraints." -"My emotional responses to school policies often influence how I navigate them." -"Developing strategies for navigating policy constraints is key to maintaining professional integrity." -"Providing feedback to school managers on policies can lead to constructive changes."
	Adaptation and Compliance	-Adjusting teaching ideologies and methods to meet school policies -Compliance with	-"Adjusting my teaching ideologies to align with school policies is a necessary adaptation." -"Complying with

Table 4.1 The result of coding (Cont.)

Selective Codes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Direct quotations
		administrative directives	administrative directives while maintaining pedagogical integrity requires careful navigation."
	Integration of Policy and Pedagogy	-Balancing institutional policies with personal teaching ideologies -Tailoring teaching approaches to align with institutional rules	- "Balancing institutional policies with my teaching ideologies often requires creative negotiation." - "Tailoring my teaching approaches to align with institutional rules while maintaining my pedagogical style is an ongoing challenge."

## 4.2 The Challenges and Opportunities Encountered by Chinese Immigration Teacher

### 4.2.1 Challenges

#### 4.2.1.1 Pedagogical Autonomy Against Institutional Policies at Classroom

During their daily interactions with students in the classroom and with colleagues and leaders in the school, these teachers encountered various challenges and barriers at different levels. The data were gathered through a series of semi-structured interview questions that explored their experiences with institutional policies, curriculum implementation, communication barriers, and work-life balance. Specifically, questions such as "How do you view institutional policies regarding

instructions in terms of opportunities and/or challenges?" and "Please explain whether you feel that you have sufficient freedom in implementing the school curriculum" provided insights into the extent of their pedagogical autonomy against institutional constraints. The teachers narrated their experiences, highlighting the difficulties they faced in maintaining effective teaching practices while adhering to school rules that often conflicted with their classroom realities. Their accounts illustrate the tensions between their professional independence and the rigid institutional policies imposed by school supervisors. Followings are their narratives:

“I am in charge of the Chinese language course in the upper grades, and I have a lot of teaching tasks because the number of class hours is relatively small. Therefore, in the classroom, I need to adopt a more traditional teacher-leading pedagogy. In this way, the completion of the teaching task can be guaranteed. However, the teaching supervisor did not agree with my teacher-leading pedagogy, and sometimes even interfered with my teaching in the classroom.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Similarly, other teachers shared almost similar experience, as below:

“There are a lot of boys in my class, and they are very naughty. That's why I took strict disciplinary measures in class. If students are given more time for group work or free study, these boys will disrupt class discipline and affect the progress of teaching. Therefore, I still adopt a teacher-led approach to my teaching strategy. But the supervisor didn't understand my teaching strategy either. The supervisor thinks that the classroom should be 'lively'.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“Unlike them, the Head of Teaching did not negate my teacher-leading teaching strategy. However, I adjust the teaching process based on the feedback from the students. Sometimes, there is a certain deviation between the adjusted teaching process and the standard teaching process required by the school. At this point, the head of instruction will think that I am not

teaching as required.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Their experiences reflect teachers’ autonomy against institutional standardization. In response to the suggestion of the teaching supervisor, they have discussed it with the teaching supervisor and hope that the teaching director will respect their initiative as teachers. However, the reply received is as follows:

“We were both in charge of the same grade level of Chinese language classes, and the supervisors both pointed out that we had the same problem. We discussed the questions raised by the supervisor in good faith. We believe that although students have autonomy, after all, their abilities are limited at this stage, and they need more arrangements and guidance from teachers. So, in the classroom, we play our leading role, and it makes sense. More importantly, the results of the class also confirmed that our strategy was correct. But the supervisor kept repeating the phrase ‘follow the rules’.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Another teacher supplemented as below:

“When I asked him why, he repeatedly stressed that he was our supervisor and that we should listen to him.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

It seems that the teachers are “unimpressed” by the school’s teaching requirements, but the teachers unanimously said:

We actually follow the rules, and accept the advice of the administrators. However, there are discrepancies between the regulations and the reality. And we’re also alive people with our own minds, so we’re also trying to find a way to achieve a balance.

According to their narratives, they encountered conflict between autonomy and institutional policies. As language teacher, they tried to enact their agents role at classroom, and also tried to balance their own pedagogical ideology and

institutional rules. However, their efforts seem to be not recognized, which further negatively influenced on their construction of professional identity. As Participate 5 presented as below:

I believe that a teacher with strong teaching ability will definitely reflect his ability in the classroom teaching effect. And I did! I tried the advice of the teaching supervisor, but the teaching effect was greatly reduced! I really couldn't accept the teaching strategy that was not as effective as I wanted. Should I assert myself or 'pander' to my supervisor?

Participate 2 has similar problem. She explain as below:

In the past, my teaching ability was recognized by my peers. But now I'm denied! My heart tells me that I'm a teacher with strong teaching skills, but I also need their approval. The feedback I'm getting now is really not positive. I'm really struggling with whether I can do it or not.

The narratives provided by the teachers underscore a profound tension between their pedagogical independence and the rigid institutional policies imposed by school supervisors. Teachers recount their challenges in sustaining effective teaching practices while being constrained by school rules that often clash with the practical realities of their classrooms. They express a sense of being undermined when their empirically validated teaching methods are disregarded in favor of strict policy adherence. This friction affects not only their teaching effectiveness but also their professional identity, as they grapple with the dilemma of asserting their expertise against the demand for conformity. This scenario leads to professional dissonance, prompting them to question their abilities and their role within the educational framework. Consequently, the axial codes "pedagogical autonomy against institutional policies" and "deconstruction of professional identity" illustrate these micro-level challenges faced by the teachers.

#### 4.2.1.2 Implicit Marginalization at school

The tensions experienced by this group of teachers occur at both micro and macro levels. Although the school acknowledges the significance of the Chinese language and assigns the five teachers to oversee curriculum development, the

teachers perceive a stark contrast between the school's emphasis on the curriculum and their own marginalization within the institution. Utilizing a set of questions, particularly question 2, this study investigates how institutional policies regarding instructions pose both opportunities and challenges for the teachers. Through these questions, it becomes evident that the school's focus on the curriculum does not align with the teachers' experiences of being marginalized, highlighting a disconnect between institutional priorities and the teachers' professional integration and support. Here are their narratives:

“Chinese language is now the most popular second foreign language in school, with the number of people attending Chinese classes second only to English. In order to meet the students’ demand for Chinese language learning, we have asked the school leaders to increase the number of Chinese language teachers. Each of us is fully loaded, each of us has at least 30 Chinese lessons per week, and at the same time, we are also responsible for teaching other courses. There are only 24 hours in a day, even if we sacrifice our rest time, it is still difficult to meet the needs of the students! Besides, even if we don't recruit full-time teachers, we can still recruit part-time teachers.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“I raised our pedagogical dilemmas and identified our needs in a collegial meeting at the faculty. When the leaders and colleagues heard about our workload, they were stunned, but as soon as they heard our proposal to increase the number of teachers, some of the local teachers cynically said that Chinese teachers can work 7\*24!” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“After this meeting, I also heard the sound of ‘It is either you do it or you do not!’ I can’t say that our workload is the highest, but at least it's beyond the reach of the vast majority of teachers. Can’t we, as school teachers, make reasonable requests for teaching? Why is it that when a local teacher makes a request, everyone else is understanding, so why should we be the only ones

questioned?” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“The only reason is that we are foreign teachers!” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Yes, I agree! (The other teachers replied in unison)

The above clip is an excerpt from focus group interview. When the teachers talked about the experience, they were each filled with righteous indignation. It was clear from their dialogue that their legitimate demands had not been met and that their local colleagues had responded unfairly to their situation. Apart from the fact that the five teachers were not treated fairly in terms of the distribution of teaching resources, they also shared other stories under various scenarios. One of the scenarios is having meeting, the following dialogue between the Participate 3 and me presents the experience of marginalization.

“During meeting, some leaders would ask the five of us for our opinions. But after asking the local teachers for their opinions, some leaders would ask us, ‘You five do not object, do you?’ If the leader really wants to know our opinion, he or she will not use rhetorical question. But we are not air, we have a presence, we make our position known.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

What did you do in respond to leader’s question? And what happened? (Interviewer asked)

“That time, i said i disagree. And i try to explain in Thai language.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

And then? (Interviewer asked)

“After two minutes, the leader said “Sorry, i don not understand your Thai, can you speak in English?” Then, I changed into English. However, several

sentences later, the leader disrupted me and said ‘Thank you so much, I understand. And if you can express yourself in Thai language, that will be better!’ The leader did not let me finish my speech. Thai language is the leader’s mother tongue and he can surely understand it, yet he asked me to speak English. When I spoke English, he would not let me finish and suggested that I improve my Thai language. He intentionally did not want me to speak but had to ask us for advice. His behaviour was disrespectful and discriminatory towards us in a public place.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

To further understand whether other teachers had similar experiences like Participate 3, I asked the teachers in the in-depth interviews and their responses are as follows:

“Interrupting me, or asking me to speak in Thai and English at the same time.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“I insisted on finishing and there was nothing they could do. But at the end of the day, they all just stopped asking our Chinese teachers for their opinions.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“The leader sometimes pretends to ask us if there is anything we want to say, and sometimes he just ignores us, even if I signify that I have something to say, the leader just turns a blind eye to it.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The shared narrative highlights a recurring theme of implicit marginalization, reflecting systemic inequities faced by the Chinese teachers. This marginalization manifests not only in the distribution of resources but also in communication dynamics within professional settings. Although these five teachers appear to have the right to express themselves, the reactions and attitudes they receive from some leaders clearly highlight their situation of implicit marginalization. As

illustrated in the meeting scenario, despite the pretense of inclusivity, the teachers' contributions are subtly undermined. The leader's use of rhetorical questions and dismissal of the teacher's attempts to express dissent in Thai, followed by an interruption when speaking English, exemplifies a lack of genuine engagement with their viewpoints. This pattern of interaction with leaders beyond classroom signals meso-level challenges encountered by these five teachers within the institutional context.

#### 4.2.1.3 Linguistic and Cultural Barriers

Another micro-level challenge within the institutional context faced by these teachers is their daily communication with colleagues. While all of them can speak Thai, their limited proficiency often results in linguistic barriers, complicating their interactions and ability to fully engage with their colleagues and students. This part of the study is interpreted through data gathered mainly from questions 5 and 11. These questions specifically address the linguistic and cultural barriers encountered in communication with colleagues and students, the extent of autonomy and freedom experienced, the professional and moral support received, and the strategies employed to adapt to Thai culture and classroom dynamics. These inquiries provide a comprehensive understanding of how linguistic and cultural factors impact their daily professional interactions and integration into the school environment. Following are their narratives:

“The students' Chinese language proficiency are varied, and in the intermediate Chinese class, some students had to resort to Thai in order to understand. However, intermediate Chinese is already grammatically complex, and I obviously felt overwhelmed if I used Thai for translation. Although I translated most of the Chinese in the class into Thai on the PPT, if I had to improvise some sentences with more complex syntactic structures, I had to ask students with higher Chinese proficiency to help me. However, I could not always rely on my students' translations.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“I can use Thai language as a classroom instruction language, such as please follow, please listen, please watch, etc., but speaking Thai in paragraphs, I really can not. So, I use English as a medium. Translating from Chinese to English has the problem of code loss, and then translating from English to Thai has the problem of code loss, so the accuracy of the meaning is not as accurate as it should be. I can't help it, I don't know Thai and my students' English is limited.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“Once during the class, there were a word with strong Chinese cultural background and there was no corresponding Thai translation. So I used English to explain it. As a result, the more I explained, the more troublesome it became because the students also did not understand the expression used in the English translation. In this way, it took one lesson and the students eventually did not understand the meaning of the word.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Whether through the use of instruction language or the use of Thai interpreters, communication barriers due to lack of language proficiency continue to be an important factor in the conduct of the class. The language barrier also had an impact on the teachers' emotions.

“I'm at the podium with my hands in the air, and my students are in their seats looking confused. What do I do? The heart goes cold!” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“I racked my brain to translate and the student still said ‘I do not understand’. I took a deep breath, adjusted my emotions, and continued to explain, and the student's expression became even more confused. All I could say was ‘OK, fine!’ to end the awkward situation.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“For a while, I resisted taking Chinese lessons because in the classroom, I could not do it without translating, and when I did, I made mistakes. After repeating this several times, I had no courage left.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“With my current language skills and those of my students, I had trouble explaining it and they had a headache listening to me explain it. It also hurt and warmed my heart to see the students still insisting on listening to my explanations. I felt hurt, because it was too difficult for everyone, and warm because the students were still trying so hard! Even if it hurts, I have to insist!” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Similarly, Participate 5 presented his vision for more fluent communication within class in the future. “Our language level is certainly not static and will always improve if we work at it. We will always speak each other better, and we will always understand each other better. Believe in your students, and believe in yourself even more!”

These narratives poignantly illustrate the profound emotional toll and practical challenges faced by teachers due to linguistic barriers. These barriers not only hinder the teaching process but also significantly affect their emotional well-being and professional efficacy. As teachers strive to convey complex concepts across cultural and linguistic divides, they frequently encounter visible confusion and misunderstanding among students, which exacerbates their own feelings of inadequacy and frustration. Despite these challenges, there is a resilient undercurrent in their reflections, characterized by a commitment to improve their language proficiency and a hopeful outlook towards better communication in the future. This duality of struggle and optimism encapsulates the essence of their experience, suggesting a pathway towards growth and understanding that could potentially transform their pedagogical practices and classroom dynamics.

Besides linguistic barriers, these teachers also encountered cultural challenges within or beyond school.

“Traditional Chinese culture explains that there is a difference between Yin and Yang, and between male and female. We are taught from an early age that boys should be masculine and girls should be gentle. Thailand’s openness on the subject of gender also forces us to accept the gender orientation of our students in the classroom. On one occasion, I had a male student in my classroom who had a moustache and obvious masculine features, but was wearing a skirt. This stark contrast was uncomfortable for me at first. Such students are not in the minority, and they are confident in their sexual orientation. What’s more, this group of students is gentle and kind-hearted. Slowly, I gradually accepted their differences, and sometimes they wouldn't mind if I played a little joke on them.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“We grew up in an environment filled with academic pressures, and conquering them was our motto from a young age. So our teachers give us pressure and encouragement. Here, children need to be pampered. When I take a harsher tone with my students, most of them will think that the teacher doesn’t like them anymore. Also, I am a person who has a direct way of speaking and I usually speak directly to students’ problems. I did not realize that this directness would hurt some of the students, and some of them cried after class and told me they wished the teacher hadn't been so direct.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The challenges posed by cultural differences in teaching and learning are also reflected in students’ acceptance and understanding of learning pressures. A clip from a focus group interview recounts teachers’ struggles with the issue.

“The majority of my students are too sensitive and can not cope with academic burden.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

That’s right! (All others)

“There was a time when I dictated Chinese characters to my students before every lesson. Chinese characters are a difficult and important part of Chinese language learning, and dictating Chinese characters before class is also a basic task for Chinese primary school students. What I didn't expect was that the students would find this task too difficult for them. Sensing their difficulties, I reduced the number of characters to be dictated each time, but even so, the students still found it difficult, and some of them even said that the teacher could not write the characters.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“I had the same problem as you in my classroom. A student asked me if he could stop writing Chinese characters. I answered directly, you can stop learning Chinese. The student ended up leaving tears in his eyes on the spot.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“The resilience of these students is almost the same as that of primary school students in China, and I also regard them directly as primary school students in China.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“In order to increase their resilience in their studies, I encourage my students by sharing my own experiences when I was studying. As a result, the students' response was ‘I would rather give up, it is easier’.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“Take it easy” is the belief of most student. (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024)

Meanwhile, the other teachers nodded and let out sighs.

With their own studying experience in China, these teacher hold very strong teaching awareness that pressure make us better. However, their teaching ideology can not transfer in Thai educational context. Different perceptions of and

responses to learning pressures as part of cross-culture are also micro-level challenges that teachers have to face within the classroom.

Daily interaction with colleagues also emerges their cultural barriers.

“In China, everything is about efficiency. Efficiency is life! Also, I’m a very action-oriented person, so I do expect the person to get back to me as soon as possible. When I work with a local colleague, I’ve already finished the process and I’ve pushed the other party, but they keep repeating ‘take your time and don’t be worry, kub!’” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“The local colleague’s take your time really isn’t a mantra. They do things really slowly.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“If ‘taking your time’ gets things done, so be it, but slow and poor quality is irritating. On several occasions, when I worked with local colleagues, they were slow and did a poor job, and often had to ‘rework’ the work. The ‘rework’ affects the overall progress.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

‘Take your time and don’t be hurry!’ is Thai culture. This is true for everyone, whether they are individuals or organizations. Here, I can only force myself to ‘Take your time and don’t be hurry!’”

“If you're slower than the Thais, then you win!” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

These narrated the scenes within and beyond institutional context underscore Thai cultural character, which is ‘Take your time and don’t be hurry!’. Thus, the cultural barriers at macro level to certain extent negative effected on their adoption.

The challenges highlighted within the context of linguistic and cultural barriers vividly encapsulate the struggles faced by Chinese teachers in Thai schools. These barriers significantly impede not only classroom interactions but also broader professional engagements. The difficulties in navigating these linguistic complexities are compounded by cultural misunderstandings, which together contribute to a sense of professional isolation and frustration. This scenario underscores the urgent need for enhanced linguistic support and cultural integration strategies within educational institutions to mitigate these barriers and foster a more inclusive and effective teaching environment.

#### 4.2.1.4 Balancing Between Life and Working

Overtime further compounds the challenges these teachers encounter. Utilizing a set of questions, particularly Questions 4, 6, and 10, this study collects data that reflects the teachers' dilemma in balancing work and life. Question 4 explores the teachers' experiences with implementing the school curriculum and whether they feel they have sufficient freedom, often revealing the time demands placed on them. Question 6 directly asks about the problems they face in juggling personal and professional lives, providing clear insights into their struggles. Question 10 delves into the strategies teachers use to create a comfort zone and manage teaching challenges, which frequently involves balancing work and personal life to maintain well-being. A clip from a focus group interview exemplifies these challenges, highlighting how extended working hours and the pressures of professional responsibilities infringe upon personal time and well-being. The relentless demands of their professional lives significantly encroach on their personal time, leading to experiences of overtime, lost sleep, and overall burnout. Despite attempts to reserve time for rest, the overwhelming workload often makes this impossible, underscoring the critical need for effective work-life balance strategies in the educational sector. Here are their narratives:

“In addition to lesson time, we have to prepare lessons and correct homework. It usually takes me almost an hour to prepare for a 45-minute lesson. If I am correcting a student's essay, a 300-word essay requires at least 20 minutes of revision time. So many classes, so many lessons, limited time. I only have to work overtime!” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Can you all tell me more about your overtime experience?  
(Interviewer said to all teachers)

“I work 6 days a week and try to take one day out to give myself a break.”  
(Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“You’re lucky to still have a day off. I haven't had a day off lately. It's basically 7\*24. my students are now preparing for their HSK (Chinese Language Level Test), which requires me to spend more time guiding them.”  
"(Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“Last year I had the same experience like you. I was so busy and anxious, that i could fall asleep until they finished this examination.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“You talk about insomnia, and I often lose sleep over work. I can’t speak Thai and my students can’t speak English, so I’m racking my brain on how to make sure my students can understand effectively. As soon as I think about it, I get anxious, and when I get anxious, I can't sleep, and then I have to get up and go to class the next day.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The narratives shared by the teachers poignantly illustrate the relentless demands of their professional lives, significantly encroaching on their personal time and well-being. Preparing lessons, and providing extra guidance for HSK, extend their work hours far beyond the classroom, leading to experiences of overtime, lost sleep, and overall burnout. Despite attempts to reserve time for rest, the overwhelming workload often makes this impossible, highlighting the severe imbalance between their professional responsibilities and personal life. This ongoing struggle underscores the critical need for effective work-life balance strategies in the educational sector.

Overtime further integrates their personal lives with their work.

“I’ve also tried to separate my work from my life in the hopes of having time for myself. But you can't get your work done without sacrificing your time off. I'm also stuck in a vortex of work that’s getting deeper and deeper and I can’t get out.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“To be honest, I am a very responsible teacher and I would rather sacrifice my time so that my students can learn more. The more responsible I am, the more tired I get of myself, and the more tired I get, the less strength I have to change the current trajectory of my life. This is why I turned my life into a job.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The narratives collectively reveal a deeply entrenched conflict between the professional obligations of teachers and their personal lives, illustrating a pervasive imbalance. These educators face continuous pressure to extend their working hours well beyond the school day to meet the needs of their students, resulting in significant personal sacrifice and deteriorating well-being. They describe a cycle where increased responsibility leads to heightened fatigue, which in turn diminishes their capacity to alter their increasingly work-centric lifestyles. This scenario emphasizes the urgent necessity for educational institutions to implement and support robust work-life balance strategies that can alleviate these burdens and help educators maintain both their professional effectiveness and personal health.

## 4.2.2 Opportunities

### 4.2.2.1 Realistic Autonomy and Construction of Professional Identity

Although these Chinese teachers are marginalized within the school, this position paradoxically grants them greater pedagogical autonomy, as revealed through the responses to questions 2, 3, and 7 in the semi-structured interviews. During these interviews, teachers discussed their experiences of being sidelined yet noted that this marginalization allowed them to exercise more freedom in their

teaching methods and curriculum implementation. This unique position enabled them to integrate innovative pedagogical strategies and adapt to the institutional context more flexibly, ultimately fostering a stronger professional identity despite their marginalized status. Their narratives are below:

We became ‘transparent’ in the school, no one wanted to control us, and even if they did, they would only come to the classroom to see what we were doing in the classroom. And that's a good thing (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Anyway, they are all ‘transparent’, and we can introduce advanced teaching methods and teaching materials to them (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“How do you all do?” I asked them.

“Based on the general learning strategies of Thai students and their personality traits, we tried task-based teaching and the output-oriented approach, which is currently very popular in the Chinese foreign language teaching community.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“When we first started the pedagogical reform, we did it ‘on the sly’, fearing that our supervisors would find out. As a result, we have been experimenting for a semester now, and the supervisors do not care. We were sure that the supervisor would not care. In the second semester of the programme, we expanded the scope of the experiment and adopted the new teaching method in all classes.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

What else have you done besides using new teaching approaches?  
(Interviewer asked further)

“Of course, sure! We have adjusted the syllabus, and in the curriculum, apart from considering the applicability of the content, we have also taken into account the needs of some students for future academic development by offering some theoretical courses.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The adjusted syllabus should be checked by the leader, so has your new adjusted syllabus been approved by the leaders? What was the whole process like?” (Interviewer asked further)

“I guess it’s a benefit of being marginalized, too. Within a few days of handing it in, the supervisor said that the five of us teachers would be held accountable for the new syllabus, and that there should be no teaching accidents. Nothing else was said, and our new programme was passed by accident.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“We were all prepared to argue our case and it passed effortlessly. Thanks to the leadership for ignoring us. We were left to ‘fend for ourselves’.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“It’s nice to be a little transparent, and the advantage of not being taken seriously is that you have more space for yourself.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

From the perspective of the five teachers, being marginalized unintentionally provided them with greater freedom for professional development, allowing them to implement bold pedagogical innovations. Initially perceived as a disadvantage, marginalization was ultimately viewed by the teachers as a beneficial factor that contributed to reconstruct their professional identity.

“There is nobody who cares what you do, so I can try boldly, and I can judge the effectiveness of my teaching by the direct feedback from students. In the classroom, I use students' feedback (e.g., facial expressions, answers) as a criterion for judgement, and the classroom has become more flexible. This ability to be flexible is one of the necessary skills for teachers. Anyway, I think I am really becoming more flexible in teaching now, and I am more confident in my teaching.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“In the past, students did not like to write Chinese characters, but now they at least do not resist writing Chinese characters as strongly as before. I think it means I've succeeded if my students can have such a change.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“With the introduction of the new pedagogy, students were more interactive in the classroom and their language knowledge was fully applied in a variety of simulated scenarios, and they felt that they had learnt something useful. Therefore, students in each class feedback that learning Chinese is not only about learning knowledge but also about using knowledge. When I heard this from the students, I thought that even if the head of the teaching staff objected to my continuing to use the new method, I had to stick to the method that suited the students.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The results achieved by the teachers not only gave them a sense of their own teaching ability but also gave them a stronger confidence in being a good teacher. When I asked them if you thought you were a good teacher, they responded as follows:

“I am a good teacher, and although my supervisor had me doubting myself, I am now convinced that I am.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“Regardless of what my supervisor thinks of me, the feedback I've received from my students has proven that I'm good, and I am a good teacher.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“I am not just a good teacher; I am a teacher who is continually striving to excel.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“I can't answer this question directly yet, but I am professional, responsible, and I can try my best to understand my students.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“My answer is yes, but I can't be complacent. Ah-ha-ha.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Based on the responses from these five teachers, they exhibit a high level of self-efficacy, which underscores their strong professional identity. The process of reconstructing their professional identity is intricate. Despite being marginalized, they actively engage in their roles as agents of change, striving to enhance their teaching practices. This proactive approach enables them to transform perceived disadvantages into advantages within their educational context.

#### 4.2.2.2 Support from Students and Colleagues: Exploring Linguistic, Cultural, and Emotional Dimensions

While facing numerous challenges, these teachers received support from students and colleagues across linguistic, cultural, and emotional dimensions, as revealed through the data mainly collected from questions 5, 6, and 8. These questions explored the teachers' experiences with linguistic and cultural barriers, their efforts to balance personal and professional life, and the extent of professional and moral support from their school community. Through their responses, it became evident that this support played a crucial role in helping them navigate and adapt to the complexities of their work environment in Thailand. Their narratives followed:

“Some of my Thai colleagues have a Chinese family background and they know some Chinese. They would help us translate words with a strong Chinese cultural background into Thai. What they translate is really easier for students to understand.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“I have a Thai colleague who I am relatively close to and she has offered to recommend some Thai language classes. Considering I’m Chinese, she also found me some Thai classes run by Chinese people.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“In particular, those colleagues with a Chinese background, perhaps there is an emotional and intellectual resonance between us, so they can understand what we are thinking more accurately and easily. So during meetings, they can help me translate. Through what they say, it is also easier for Thais to understand each other. So there were no more interruptions by the leaders.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The narratives shared by the teachers highlight the significant role that linguistic support from colleagues plays in their professional environment. Colleagues with Chinese backgrounds or knowledge of Chinese language provide crucial translation assistance, enabling clearer communication and cultural understanding in the classroom and during meetings. This support not only facilitates more effective teaching by making content more accessible to students but also enhances interpersonal interactions during staff meetings by preventing miscommunications and interruptions. Such support reflects an important form of collaboration that bridges cultural and linguistic gaps, thereby fostering a more inclusive and effective educational setting.

In terms of cultural dimension, colleagues support them a lot.

“I was at first puzzled as to why students were so vulnerable, and even more so, why their resilience was so weak. I had a serious discussion with my Thai colleague about this. My Thai colleague was an exchange student in China so

he understands the problem. He told me that in general, Thai students are happy learners, and they have not been criticized by their teachers as much as Chinese students, so their inner strength is not as strong as that of Chinese students. Also, many students don't have as high expectations of themselves as Chinese students. 'Being content with the status quo' is a characteristic of Thai students and a Thai culture, so when Chinese teachers want them to get stronger and stronger and demand more and more from them, they can not easily bear it." (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

"I grew up with teachers demanding excellence, so it was exhausting. I do the same with my own students, and as a result, they are tired and so am I. My colleague told me that Thai teachers have a similarity in education to traditional Chinese culture, which is to go with the flow. Many of my Thai colleagues believe that students are naturally different from each other and that teachers need to respect their differences and set requirements based on the students' actual situation. Through communication with them, I have gradually come to accept the student's 'Teacher, can't you make it easier?' This culture of respecting individual differences has balanced my heart and eased the 'conflict' between me and my students." (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

"At home, we prize efficiency and hate every second of work. In doing so, our administrative efficiency as well as productivity is indeed incredibly high, but how tiring! People are not machines, they always need to rest, so Thai colleagues' taking their time is also a way of separating their personal life from their work life. Now that I think about it, it's quite good. I just can't slow down, so life becomes work. I should learn from them properly too." (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The narratives from the teachers underscore the pivotal role of cultural understanding and support from colleagues in adapting to the educational context of Thailand. Colleagues with deeper cultural and educational insights help

Chinese teachers understand the temperament and learning expectations of Thai students, who are typically less accustomed to the rigorous demands often seen in Chinese education. This support has enabled the teachers to adjust their expectations and teaching methods, fostering a more accommodating and effective learning environment. This blending of cultural perspectives not only enhances the teachers' professional practices but also contributes to a more harmonious classroom atmosphere, ultimately aiding in the delicate balance between demanding excellence and respecting individual learner differences.

Thai culture is very hierarchical and therefore runs a hierarchical institutional norms within the school. With the help of their Thai colleagues, Chinese teachers gradually developed a sense of institutional norms and were able to live within this set of norms.

“In the past, when I was confronted by leaders, I would argue my case to their face. In Thai culture, there is a gulf in status between leaders and ordinary employees. Employees have to control their emotions and should not display resentment; they should listen to the leader's advice with an open mind and then reply when the leader agrees to speak up for them. I asked my Thai colleague why he did that. Their reply was ‘we all do it’.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The scenario described above reflects an institutional norm in Thai culture characterized by a hierarchical power relationship between leaders and employees. This hierarchy mandates a significant deference to authority, where employees are expected to suppress their emotions and refrain from openly disagreeing with leaders. The norm demands that employees listen respectfully and speak only when it is deemed appropriate by their superiors. This practice emphasizes the power imbalance and enforces a culture of submission and restraint among employees, reinforcing the higher status of leaders within the organizational structure. The acceptance of this norm as ‘what everyone does’ further cements its role in defining the dynamics of power and communication within the institution.

“My colleague advised me to nod my head politely and say ‘yes, yes, yes’ when the leader is talking, whether the leader is right or not. Then, when the leader has finished speaking, tell the leader that you have other ideas that you would like to share with him or her.....I tried, and the result is amazing. My director let me to express my idea until i finished it.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“My Thai colleague told me that some leaders are hard to convince or even impossible to convince. Instead of arguing, it is better to ‘get out of the way’, which at least will not make the leader hate him or her..... I followed as my colleague suggested, the result is better than before, at least no verbal conflict.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The narrative highlights a pivotal shift in how teachers, exemplified by Participate 4 and Participate 2, adapt to the power dynamics within a Thai educational context. Initially facing challenges with direct confrontations against leadership, they adopted culturally nuanced strategies recommended by local colleagues. This approach involved agreeing outwardly while waiting for a suitable moment to share their views, thereby fostering more effective engagement with superiors. Such strategies not only improved communication and reduced conflicts but also strengthened their professional relationships, demonstrating a proactive transition from merely understanding to actively adhering to institutional norms to sustain harmony and efficacy in their roles.

Another primary support from both students and colleagues is emotional support. As Participate 1 narrated as:

I’ve been angry in class a few times because the class didn’t do too well on a test. After class both the high achievers and the low achievers came to comfort me. The most gratifying thing to me was that those few students with less than satisfactory grades took the initiative to apologize to me, and they also said that they would definitely improve next time. They were all adults and they were still like children, so sincere, I really didn't expect it. The moment I saw them apologizing voluntarily, my heart softened.

Participate 1 shared the emotional support dynamic between the teacher and the students. Despite the teacher's frustration with the class's poor test performance, both high and low achievers showed empathy by comforting the teacher, indicating a strong emotional bond. Remarkably, even students who performed poorly took responsibility and promised to improve, displaying maturity and sincerity. This gesture of apology and commitment from the students not only alleviated the teacher's anger but also deepened the emotional connection, highlighting the mutual respect and support that can enhance the educational experience and teacher-student relationships. Participate 1 also highlights the touching moment happened at the class.

“The topic of one lesson was fruit, and in class the students asked me what my favourite fruit was. I thought the students were just applying what they had learned, but to my surprise, the next week in class, the students brought in my favourite fruit. When I asked them how they knew I liked these fruits, they said, ‘Teacher, we asked you in class.’ I was really choked up, some students saw that my eyes were wet, and immediately handed me tissues. They are so simple and cute, what reason do I have not to accept their shortcomings.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Participate 3, Participate 4, and Participate 5 mentioned the emotional support from Thai colleagues.

“When we had the meeting, the leaders just ignored us and I was so frustrated after the meeting, I felt marginalized. I expressed all my concerns to the same time. My colleague said that he had a good relationship with another leader and that he would reflect this to the leader. I didn't know at the time if he was just saying that, though. But the second time we met, a leader really took the initiative to ask us Chinese teachers for our opinions and listened to what we had to say. After the meeting, this colleague said that our Chinese teachers' proposal was great. That time, I felt that we Chinese teachers had our own Thai peers and that we were not alone.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“I don’t know why there was a time when the head of teaching particularly liked to come and listen to my lessons and criticize me afterwards, I was depressed to the point of anxiety. My Thai colleague, she also volunteered to share her similar experience with me. Together we “Tucao”, which is a Chinese informal word and refers to complain about somebody or something, and share ideas. It’s great to have a colleague like that!” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The emotional link between Chinese teachers and Thai teacher extant from working context to private context, as below:

“Once I was talking to my Thai colleague about how sad I was that I could not take care of my elderly parents while working abroad alone. My colleague patiently listened to me without showing any impatience. It’s a blessing and a comfort to be able to talk to a colleague outside of work.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“Sometimes I complain to my Thai colleagues about the Thai public transport system, why the buses are so slow, why Bangkok is always stuck in traffic, etc., and they patiently listen to my complaints and really sincerely reassure me and say they can drive me home. Listening to my complaints was already a comfort, and it made me feel like I had something to fall back on.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“My Thai colleagues also knew that we would be lonely as foreigners in Thailand, so a few of my Thai colleagues who were having a good time would invite me to their homes. Their mums and dads also welcomed me and treated me as their own child. It was really touching.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The emotional bonds between Chinese and Thai teachers extend beyond professional interactions into more personal realms, illustrating deep intercultural empathy and support. For instance, Chinese teachers experiencing personal challenges find solace in the patient and understanding responses from their Thai colleagues, whether discussing family concerns, local transportation frustrations, or feelings of isolation. These interactions not only provide emotional support but also foster a sense of belonging and familial warmth, significantly enhancing the expatriate experience and mitigating the challenges of living and working abroad.

### **4.3 Coping with Challenges**

While this group of teachers faces multifaceted challenges in a foreign environment, they actively engage in negotiating with institutional policies, constructing a third space, and adapting to Thai culture as means of responding effectively to these challenges.

#### **4.3.1 Negotiating with Institutional Policies**

This section explores how teachers manage challenges within the institutional context, specifically through the lens of negotiating with institutional policies. The data in this section were gathered from a set of questions, primarily from 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, and 10. These questions delve into the teachers' perspectives on institutional policies, their freedom in implementing the curriculum, their autonomy, the support they receive, the conflicts they face, and the strategies they use to create a sense of empowerment in their teaching roles.

Negotiating with institutional policies encompasses various forms, including rules imposed by administrators, which also constitute a type of policy. The following conversation with Participate 1 exemplifies how a teacher negotiates with policies set by administrators:

Despite the fact that my teaching supervisor recognized the effectiveness of my classroom teaching, the teaching supervisor dismissed my teaching strategies. I explained to her many times, but she always used her own experience and the school's rules to

dismiss us and forced me to change my teaching strategies and even threatened me.

What and how did you do? (Interviewer asked)

After thinking about it, I am convinced that the effectiveness of teaching is the only criterion for testing the truth, so I continue to stick to my teaching strategy.

What happened after you making decision? (Interviewer asked)

The administrator became angrier with me and the threatening tone grew stronger. I told our headmaster about it, and asked the headmaster to survey the students to see if my teaching strategies were meeting their needs and to see what the students thought about the effectiveness of my teaching. After the survey, the administrator didn't talk to me with my teaching strategies anymore.

Do you think your insistence is a challenge to the authority of the administrator? (Interviewer asked)

I'm not trying to challenge anyone's authority, what's proven to be true, I'm going to stand by. The position of administrator should not be used as a reason to abandon the right choice.

Another example of their negotiation involves resisting institutional hierarchical norms. Teachers reported feeling marginalized in meetings, often being interrupted or silenced. Despite this, they actively sought to make their voices heard and Participate in decision-making processes.

“In a meeting, if the leader asked for the opinions of many teachers but not us Chinese teachers, I would just raise my hand to indicate my opinion.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The leader interrupted me again and I asked the leader directly if he wouldn't let me speak because I was a foreigner. (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Hierarchy is a fundamental characteristic of Thai culture, which is reflected in the hierarchical nature of institutional policies. However, these teachers are dare to make their voice and challenge the imbalance power relationship between these teachers and

leaders. Their efforts that are resistant against the administrator's individual preference and marginalization demonstrate how they negotiate with institutional policies.

### **4.3.2 Constructing of their Third-space at School**

Schools serve as sites where institutional policies, individual backgrounds, and pedagogical beliefs intersect, involving a multitude of factors. Consequently, within this institutional framework, teachers creatively construct their third-space. This space represents a dynamic environment where they reconcile and synthesize structural influences with their personal pedagogical practices and beliefs, effectively navigating and blending these diverse elements. The data for this section were gathered through a set of questions, including questions 2, 3, 4, 7, and 9, which delve into teachers' views on institutional policies, their freedom in implementing the curriculum, their sense of autonomy, the support they receive, and the conflicts they face.

For example, question 2 explores how teachers perceive opportunities and challenges related to institutional policies. Question 3 considers the roles of school administrators in curriculum implementation, while question 4 focuses on teachers' experiences and feelings about their freedom to implement the curriculum. Question 7 asks teachers to share examples of their autonomy or freedom in their work, and question 9 investigates how teachers handle conflicting experiences in teaching. The responses to these questions illuminate how teachers integrate and adapt institutional policies with their personal and pedagogical approaches. This integration allows them to create a third-space that reflects both institutional demands and individual teaching philosophies. Through this process, teachers navigate the complexities of their professional environments, balancing structural constraints with their own educational values and practices. The following dialogues are representative.

When faced with all the school rules on teaching and the rules of the administrator, what do you think about them?" (Interviewer asked)

“Regulations are regulations, and enforcement is enforcement.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

Can you explain more about it? (Interviewer asked)

For example, the adopted pedagogical strategies in classroom. The school’s rules and regulations allow us teachers the flexibility to use pedagogy according to the classroom situation, but the administrator forces us in his way. We are guided by the school’s rules and regulations and use our own pedagogical judgement as the main basis. If we have to enforce the policies of the instructional supervisor, we still use our own instructional judgement as the primary basis. (Participate 2) In a similar context, Participate 5 elaborates on how he navigates the balance between adhering to the school’s overarching educational policies and asserting their personal teaching methodologies, as below:

In terms of assessment methods, while the school encourages standardized tests, I prefer continuous assessment to gauge student understanding over time”. “Although there’s pressure to follow strict guidelines, I integrate both approaches, using the school’s framework as a guideline but tailoring assessments to fit the needs of my students.” Another excerpt that reflect their their-space is associated with the syllabus.

“In our revised syllabus, that is the product of a combination of school regulations and our perceptions. Because the syllabus needs to be given to the leaders for review, the content in must be in line with the school's philosophy. We abide by the school's philosophy in the overall framework, but the specific design content and arrangement is based on our understanding.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The teachers in the study demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the school's policies and actively construct their third-space by blending institutional directives with their own educational philosophies. Teachers perceive the rules as rigid frameworks but use their professional discretion to adapt these to the classroom's

needs. For instance, while the school may prescribe certain teaching methods or assessment strategies, teachers like Participate 2 and Participate 5 personalize these approaches, integrating their pedagogical beliefs and adapting their methods to suit student needs more effectively. Similarly, Participate 4 creatively aligns the school's syllabus with personal insights, ensuring compliance while tailoring content to reflect both the school's philosophy and their own understanding. This adaptation allows them to maintain professional integrity and effectiveness within the constraints of institutional policies.

In addition, their third-space exists in their interaction with students. The following excerpts demonstrate their third-space in their pedagogical activities.

“The general environment over here is one of encouraging education, and education cannot be all encouragement and no criticism. Criticism is also a form of love. So I'll get tough with students I've been teaching for a while. I will remind them of small problems and get angry if they don't correct them.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“The school emphasizes both the need for teachers to respect students' self-selection and the need to enhance students' ability in job market. To enhance the competitiveness of employment that will certainly have to withstand the high requirements of screening, certainly have to experience a high standard of exercise. However, Thai students, at heart, do not have such high expectations of themselves. Therefore, in this regard, I take a more lenient approach to the management of 'self-abandoned' students, while those who have the desire to pursue academic training and management is quite rigorous.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“Many students demonstrate a strong interest in learning on the one hand, and a hesitant attitude towards overcoming learning difficulties on the other. From the students' point of view, giving up is a happy way of learning, but it is very detrimental to their development. Therefore, in my classroom, I don't allow

any student to give up lightly, I can allow them to do it slowly, but never allow to say give up.” (Participate 3, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The excerpts reveal how teachers creatively navigate the space between the school’s educational philosophy and their personal pedagogical beliefs, thereby constructing their "third-space" during classroom interactions. Participate 1 employs a blend of encouragement and criticism, recognizing that effective education involves balancing positive reinforcement with necessary corrective feedback. This approach aligns with the broader educational goals while still adhering to their understanding of pedagogical effectiveness. Similarly, Participate 3 differentiates his approach based on individual student aspirations and abilities, applying rigorous standards to those aiming for competitive markets while adopting a more lenient stance towards students who are less ambitious. This adaptive strategy not only respects students’ self-selection but also pushes them towards growth, illustrating a tailored, responsive educational practice that serves diverse student needs.

This section focus on how teachers negotiate a unique space within the Thai educational environment that harmonizes their individual pedagogical identities with the prevailing institutional norms. This third-space fosters an adaptive milieu where they can express professional agency, enhance self-efficacy, and refine teaching practices. By bridging the gap between their personal teaching philosophies and the school's cultural and operational expectations, these educators not only assert their professional autonomy but also enhance their effectiveness and satisfaction in their roles. This integrative approach significantly impacts their ability to navigate educational challenges and foster a conducive learning environment.

#### **4.3.3 Adapting to Thai Culture and Improving Language Proficiency**

This section explores and analyzes how teachers integrate into Thailand’s multicultural environment and enhance their language skills to navigate the challenges they face effectively. The data for this analysis were gathered through a range of questions above, primarily questions 5 and 6, which focus on linguistic and cultural

barriers and work-life balance. The focus is on the strategies these educators employ to culturally and linguistically assimilate within their professional and personal lives. This exploration sheds light on their efforts to overcome barriers, foster deeper connections with the community, and enhance their teaching efficacy in a culturally diverse setting.

Through semi-structured interviews, teachers shared their experiences and strategies for adapting to the Thai cultural and linguistic environment. Question 5 addressed the linguistic and cultural barriers faced when communicating with Thai colleagues and students, while Question 6 explored the balance between personal and professional lives. These insights reveal the complex process of cultural adaptation and the proactive measures taken by teachers to integrate into their new surroundings. By understanding and embracing the cultural dynamics at play, teachers can create more inclusive and effective educational environments that cater to the diverse needs of their students. In the multicultural environment of Thai institutions, the openness allows students to confidently express their sexual orientation, a scenario that might pose a cultural challenge for teachers from more conservative backgrounds. This cultural divergence requires teachers to adapt their perspectives and pedagogical approaches to embrace and respect this diversity. The provided excerpt from individual interview with Participate 3 detail the process by which a teacher adjusts to the diverse identities of their students.

Are there any sexual minority students in the classes you teach? (Interviewer asked)

Yes! Several students who had privately explained their sexuality to me wanted me to look at them with a "double standard".

How to understand "double standard"? (Interviewer asked)

They feel they have a double identity, looking like boys on the outside and a little princess living inside. So they want me to look at them in a way that I don't see them in a single perspective. In short, they want to see them as a combination of a boy and a girl.

How do you realize that? (Interviewer asked)

Normally I hold them to the same standards I hold boys to. For example, when criticizing students, I criticize girls in a harsher tone than boys. When they students were on the verge of suffering, I realized that I was going to treat them by the same standards as I treat girls. So, I immediately adjusted my tone, adjusted myself. My tone eased and their emotions stabilized. Perhaps my shift in tone with them is an indication that I am embracing their differences.

Besides adjusting your tone, what else did you do? (Interviewer asked)

This whole thing is pretty funny. One day the normally masculine boy came to class wearing a jacket with distinctly feminine features. When I saw it, I joked to him and said, "Pretty girl, you've changed your style of dress today." The student replied happily, "You understand me so deeply." This was the first time I had joked with them about gender.

The adaptation to the cultural diversity in a Thai educational institution from Participate 3' narrative is reflected through his efforts to understand and respect the nuanced identities of sexual minority students. Recognizing the unique challenges these students face, the teacher adjusts his interaction style by modifying his tone and approach to be more inclusive and supportive. His use of humor and personalized remarks, like referring to a masculine-presenting student with feminine attire as "Pretty girl," demonstrates a significant shift towards embracing and validating the students' expressed identities. This adaptation not only fosters a more inclusive classroom atmosphere but also builds stronger, more empathetic connections with the students. The following statements from other teachers also reflect their supportive attitudes towards students who are sexual minorities:

“I think they are so cute, I love them. Their opinions and their behaviour within the classroom create an delight atmosphere for us.” (Participate 1, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“They are not special, they are unique! Because of them, my classroom is more meaningful and more colorful.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“You can not avoid this kind of students. They are students, they are kids. Love them!” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“Everything could be acceptable in Thailand, so i can accept them from my heart.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The adaptation process not only involves recognizing and validating the students’ expressions of identity but also integrating this understanding into the classroom dynamics and curriculum to foster an inclusive educational atmosphere. Teachers, therefore, must navigate these cultural variations sensitively and effectively to ensure that all students feel valued and supported in their learning environments.

Outside the classroom, their perspective on the work efficiency of Thai colleagues also reflects their cultural adaptation. As the following statements manifest:

“The culture here is to take your time and so do your colleagues here. No matter how anxious you are, they take their time. I want to respect their productivity and the way they work.” (Participate 2, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“Every country has its own people. Most Chinese people are characterised by their resistance to high pressure, their ability to take action and their efficiency. These characteristics are our strengths, but they also become our weaknesses because we unconsciously demand the same from others. There are quite a lot of differences between nationalities, and we need to hold on to our own characteristics as well as accepting those of others. Maybe our Thai colleagues don't quite accept our efficiency and work style either.” (Participate 4, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

“Chinese culture is about balance. We Chinese emphasize speed, our Thai colleagues the opposite. This way, one fast and one slow is not exactly balanced. Ours complement each other in one way.” (Participate 5, personal communication, May 6, 2024).

The excerpts illustrate how the teachers are adapting to the Thai cultural emphasis on a more relaxed pace of work, which contrasts sharply with the efficiency-oriented work style typical in Chinese culture. Participate 2 expresses a desire to respect the local work ethic despite personal anxiety about productivity. Participate 4 acknowledges the fundamental differences in work style between Chinese and Thai colleagues, suggesting a need for mutual acceptance of diverse national characteristics. Participate 5 conceptualizes these differences as complementary, indicating that the balance of varying speeds can enhance workplace dynamics. Collectively, these responses highlight a thoughtful adaptation to cultural differences, emphasizing respect, acceptance, and appreciation of diverse work styles beyond the classroom.

Another aspect through which teachers strive to integrate into the local society and work environment is by enhancing their language proficiency. With the help of students and colleagues, all teachers agreed that they are more willing to speak Thai. As Participate 1 narrated, “If I speak Thai incorrectly, they don't get angry, instead they politely help me correct it and tell me what the correct expression is. Their acceptance of my broken Thai has made me not afraid to speak it.” Similarly, Participate 3 explained, “It doesn't matter if I say something wrong, I have Thai colleagues to help me correct it. This is language acquisition under natural context.”

Participant Participate 1 discussed their teaching experience in a Thai private school, emphasizing the challenges and strategies used to adapt to the new environment. Participate 1 highlighted the struggle with hierarchical institutional policies that often clashed with their pedagogical autonomy. Despite these challenges, Participate 1 found ways to navigate the rigid structures by gradually integrating their teaching methods with the school's expectations. They also faced linguistic barriers, which initially hindered effective communication with students and colleagues. However, through

continuous efforts to improve their Thai language skills and the support from Thai colleagues, Participate 1 was able to overcome these obstacles. The participant emphasized the importance of cultural adaptation, noting how understanding and respecting Thai cultural norms helped in building better relationships with students and colleagues. This adaptive approach not only facilitated a smoother teaching experience but also contributed to their personal and professional growth.

Participant Participate 2 shared insights into the cultural and institutional dynamics of teaching Chinese in Thailand. They pointed out that the hierarchical nature of Thai educational institutions often led to feelings of marginalization among foreign teachers. Despite this, Participate 2 managed to assert their pedagogical autonomy by creating a "third-space" where they could blend their teaching philosophies with institutional requirements. Linguistic challenges were also a significant part of Participate 2's experience, but with consistent effort and support from the local community, they were able to improve their language proficiency. This linguistic improvement was crucial for better classroom management and effective communication. Participate 2 also underscored the role of cultural competence in their adaptation process. By engaging with Thai cultural practices and norms, they were able to foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, which enhanced their teaching effectiveness and student engagement.

Participant Participate 3 focused on the emotional and psychological aspects of adapting to a foreign teaching environment. They highlighted the initial cultural shock and the stress associated with balancing professional responsibilities and personal life. The hierarchical policies of the institution often left Participate 3 feeling undervalued and restricted in their teaching approach. However, Participate 3 utilized the support from colleagues and students to navigate these challenges. They emphasized the importance of building a support network within the school community, which provided both emotional and practical assistance. Improving language skills was another critical aspect of Participate 3's adaptation strategy. By becoming more proficient in Thai, they were able to engage more effectively with students and colleagues, reducing misunderstandings and fostering a more

collaborative environment. Participant 3's experience underscores the significance of cultural adaptation and the need for supportive institutional policies that recognize and value the contributions of foreign teachers.

Participant 4 provided a comprehensive overview of their teaching journey, focusing on the interplay between institutional policies and personal teaching philosophies. They experienced significant challenges due to the rigid hierarchical structure of the school, which often limited their pedagogical freedom. However, Participant 4 managed to negotiate these constraints by integrating their innovative teaching methods within the institutional framework, creating a "third-space" for pedagogical experimentation. Linguistic barriers also posed initial challenges, but Participant 4's dedication to learning Thai and the support from local colleagues helped them overcome these issues. The participant highlighted the importance of understanding and respecting Thai cultural norms, which played a crucial role in building rapport with students and colleagues. Participant 4's experience demonstrates the potential for personal and professional growth through adaptive strategies and emphasizes the need for more flexible and inclusive institutional policies.

Participant 5 discussed their experiences with cultural adaptation and professional development in a Thai private school. They faced considerable challenges due to the hierarchical and often rigid institutional policies that conflicted with their teaching philosophies. Despite these obstacles, Participant 5 found ways to assert their pedagogical autonomy by creatively integrating their methods with the school's expectations. Language barriers were a significant challenge, but with persistent effort and support from the school community, Participant 5 improved their Thai language skills, enhancing classroom communication and student engagement. Participant 5 also stressed the importance of cultural competence, noting how understanding Thai cultural practices and norms facilitated better relationships and a more supportive learning environment. This adaptation process not only improved their teaching effectiveness but also contributed to their overall well-being and professional satisfaction.

In this chapter the focus is on how teachers navigated the cultural and linguistic landscape of Thailand. They actively engaged in understanding and embracing Thai work culture, which emphasizes a more relaxed pace, contrasting with their own efficiency-driven backgrounds. Teachers also work on enhancing their Thai language skills, which not only aids in their professional interactions but also helps them integrate more deeply into the local community. This dual approach of cultural and linguistic adaptation underscores their efforts to harmonize their professional responsibilities with their personal growth and social integration in Thailand.



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter synthesizes the findings and discussions presented in the previous chapters, offering a comprehensive conclusion to the study. This chapter revisits the primary research questions, analyzing how the lived experiences of five Chinese language teachers in a Thai international school provide insights into the intersection of structural, cultural, and linguistic factors.

#### 5.1 Discussion

This study explores the lived experiences of five Chinese language teachers in a Thai international school. Employing thematic analysis, the research identifies five key themes: Professional Identity amidst Collectivism, Cultural Confluence in Teaching, Adapting to Cross-Cultural Challenges, Achieving Equilibrium, and Adjusting to Institutional Policy. These themes collectively reveal the teachers' experiences and responses within and beyond the institutional context. The subsequent section elaborates on how the study addresses the research objectives, providing detailed insights into the interaction between these themes and the teachers' professional dynamics.

RQ1: What is the essence of the lived experiences encountered by the Chinese teachers school

To this question, this study utilized thematic analysis to discern five principal themes, each elucidating distinct aspects of the teachers' integration into their work environment.

The first theme, "Professional Identity amidst Collectivism," captures how teachers balance their personal aspirations with institutional expectations, adjusting

their teaching practices to align with collective goals. The second theme, "Cultural Confluence in Teaching," demonstrates how teachers adapt their pedagogical strategies to fit the cultural and institutional demands of Thai schools, blending traditional methods with culturally sensitive approaches.

"Adapting to Cross-Cultural Challenges," the third theme, highlights teachers' efforts to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers through various strategies, enhancing their communication and effectiveness in the classroom. The fourth theme, "Achieving Equilibrium," focuses on how teachers manage work-life balance, developing coping mechanisms to handle stress and personal responsibilities alongside their teaching duties.

Lastly, "Adjusting to Institutional Policy" explores how teachers navigate and reconcile school policies with their pedagogical beliefs, modifying their practices to fit institutional requirements while maintaining their professional integrity.

These themes collectively provide insight into the complexity of their lived experiences, showcasing their adaptability and resilience in navigating the challenges of a multicultural educational environment.

RQ2: What opportunities and challenges did they encounter as Chinese teachers?

This study investigates the lived experiences of Chinese language teachers in a Thai private school, revealing a combination of challenges and opportunities. At the macro level, teachers face structural challenges such as rigid hierarchical policies, administrative constraints, and the distinct Thai working style, which collectively hinder their professional agency. Marginalization within the institution further compounds their difficulties, negatively impacting their ability to adapt to the foreign working and living environment. Although linguistic and cultural barriers pose significant challenges, these factors are less influential compared to structural constraints. Additionally, the intersection of their personal and professional lives, particularly under marginalized circumstances, leads to heightened emotional and mental stress, emphasizing the delicate balance these teachers must maintain in their roles.

Despite these difficulties, marginalization offers an unexpected opportunity by granting these teachers greater pedagogical autonomy. Their sidelined position

enables them to creatively redefine their professional identities and teaching methodologies. This autonomy becomes a key area for professional growth amidst institutional challenges. Another important aspect of their adaptation comes from the support provided by students and colleagues, which is crucial for navigating linguistic and cultural norms. This support network not only facilitates smoother integration into the Thai educational context but also enriches their teaching practices and fosters professional development, highlighting the importance of interpersonal connections in overcoming the structural and cultural challenges they face.

RQ3: How and to what extent did the Chinese teachers cope with the cultural differences at work?

This study explores how Chinese language teachers in Thai private schools navigate their culturally influenced work environments by employing various strategies, including negotiating institutional policies, constructing a third-space, and enhancing cultural and language proficiency. Institutional policies, particularly hierarchical norms and administrative directives, often conflict with the teachers' autonomy and pedagogical ideologies. Despite these power dynamics, the teachers assert their agency by resisting compliance during meetings and classroom activities, pushing back against these norms. By creatively integrating and balancing institutional policies with their own teaching practices, they construct a third-space where they can exercise greater freedom and innovation in their pedagogical approaches. This strategic negotiation highlights their agency and adaptability within an otherwise rigid institutional structure.

In addition to policy negotiation, these teachers adapt to the Thai cultural context and work on improving their language skills to navigate the workplace more effectively. These efforts to enhance cultural competence and language proficiency address the cultural and linguistic barriers they face, allowing for smoother interactions with both students and colleagues. The combination of these strategies reflects a dynamic, ongoing process of adaptation and professional development. Through third-space construction, cultural adaptation, and language improvement, these teachers not only respond to challenges but also reconstruct their professional

identity, achieving a sense of self-efficacy and balance in their work environments.

## 5.2 Theoretical Implications

This study explores the lived experiences of Chinese language teachers in Thai international schools, offering insights into how they navigate and respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by their new cultural and working environments. Through thematic analysis, several themes emerged that illustrate the essence of their experiences and interactions within a foreign context. These findings align with and extend existing literature on international language teachers, offering valuable theoretical insights into their complex realities.

In alignment with current studies on international language teachers (Gao et al., 2022; Rushton, Rawlings, Steadman, & Towers, 2023; Sherman & Teemant, 2022; Vitanova, 2018), the findings emphasize the critical role of both structural factors, such as institutional norms and policies, and cultural and linguistic factors, such as cross-cultural interactions and language proficiency, in shaping the experiences of international language teachers. Structural factors, in particular, emerge as pivotal in influencing teachers' adaptation to new working environments (Gao et al., 2022). More liberal and democratic institutional policies can significantly enhance international language teachers' ability to exercise their agency, allowing them to balance their pedagogical beliefs with institutional rules and policies. This alignment facilitates professional integration and empowers teachers to reconcile their teaching methodologies within institutional frameworks (Rushton et al., 2023). While cultural and linguistic factors are important, their impact appears less significant compared to structural factors in this context.

Although prevailing empirical evidence highlights the adverse effects of cross-cultural challenges on teachers (Hong & Zhang, 2019; Roskell, 2013; Wang et al., 2022), this study presents a nuanced perspective, suggesting that cross-cultural experiences can enhance teachers' pedagogical philosophies and foster empathy. Contrary to existing literature that underscores the negative impact of structural factors

on teachers' agency (Ewe & Min, 2021; Hong & Zhang, 2019), the findings reveal that marginalization may paradoxically grant teachers greater flexibility and autonomy in their teaching practices. This flexibility facilitates the development of a third space where teachers can innovate and integrate their instructional strategies within the constraints of institutional frameworks, ultimately enriching their professional identity and pedagogical effectiveness.

This study offers significant theoretical contributions by utilizing Hofstede's cultural dimension theory to explore the experiences of Chinese international teachers in Thailand, highlighting the impact of cross-cultural dynamics on their professional practices. It extends existing research, which primarily focuses on sociological perspectives, by emphasizing the influence of institutional culture, workplace norms, and students' expectations on teachers' adaptation to foreign environments. The study also substantiates the applicability of Hofstede's theory in the educational field, demonstrating its relevance across diverse contexts and enriching our understanding of how cultural factors shape educational practices. Furthermore, it fills a gap in the literature by providing insights into the experiences of Chinese teachers in non-Western countries, offering a broader view of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by educators in multicultural settings. Overall, the research underscores the importance of considering both structural and cultural factors in understanding the professional lives of international teachers, contributing to both theoretical frameworks and practical implications in educational settings.

Overall, this study underscores the importance of considering both structural and cultural factors in understanding the professional lives of international teachers. It highlights the dynamic interplay between institutional policies, cultural expectations, and personal pedagogical beliefs, offering a comprehensive view of how teachers navigate and respond to their working environments. By doing so, this research not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of international teaching experiences but also provides practical implications for supporting international teachers in diverse educational settings. Moreover, the findings contribute to Hofstede's cultural dimension theory by demonstrating its applicability in examining how cultural dynamics and institutional

contexts influence teaching practices and professional identity development in an educational setting.

### **5.3 Practical Implications**

The exploration of the lived experiences of Chinese language teachers in Thai international schools offers a wealth of practical implications for various stakeholders, including policymakers, school administrators, educators, and teacher training institutions. Addressing structural, cultural, and linguistic factors, these implications aim to foster a more supportive and effective educational environment.

Policymakers should consider revising educational policies to grant more pedagogical autonomy to international teachers. Flexible policies that allow teachers to adapt their teaching methodologies to suit their professional expertise and the needs of their students can enhance teaching efficacy and job satisfaction. Additionally, policies should mandate cultural competence training for educators to ensure they are well-equipped to navigate diverse cultural landscapes. This training should be integrated into teacher certification and ongoing professional development programs. Furthermore, policymakers should advocate for and fund language support services for international teachers. Providing resources such as language classes and bilingual teaching materials can help teachers overcome linguistic barriers and improve classroom communication.

School administrators should create an environment that encourages pedagogical innovation. This can be achieved by providing teachers with the flexibility to implement diverse instructional strategies and by supporting professional development initiatives focused on innovative teaching methods. Moreover, administrators should ensure that international teachers are included in decision-making processes. This involves actively seeking their input in curriculum planning, policy discussions, and school committees, thereby enhancing their sense of belonging and professional agency. Additionally, administrators should implement policies that support work-life balance, such as flexible scheduling and wellness programs.

Providing resources like fitness classes, counseling services, and family support can help reduce stress and prevent burnout among teachers.

Educators should strive to balance institutional policies with their pedagogical beliefs by constructing a third-space that integrates these elements. This approach allows teachers to innovate within the constraints of institutional frameworks, ultimately enhancing their professional identity and effectiveness. Teachers should actively engage in cultural exchange and be open to learning from their colleagues and students. Understanding and appreciating cultural differences can lead to more empathetic and effective teaching practices, fostering a more inclusive classroom environment. Continuous improvement of language skills is essential for effective communication and integration into the local community. Teachers should take advantage of language support services and peer learning opportunities to enhance their proficiency and teaching effectiveness.

Teacher training programs should incorporate cultural competence as a core component. This training should include practical strategies for managing cultural diversity in the classroom and understanding the cultural dynamics of the host country. Teacher training institutions should offer language courses tailored to the specific needs of international teachers. These courses should focus on practical language use in educational settings and provide ongoing support to help teachers maintain and improve their language skills. Training programs should prepare teachers to navigate institutional policies and hierarchical norms effectively. This preparation should include strategies for negotiating with administrators and understanding the power dynamics within schools.

The practical implications derived from this study underscore the necessity of a comprehensive and culturally responsive approach to supporting international teachers. By addressing structural, cultural, and linguistic factors, educational institutions and stakeholders can create an environment that enhances the experiences and effectiveness of international teachers, ultimately benefiting the entire school community. Implementing these strategies requires a concerted effort from

policymakers, administrators, educators, and training institutions to foster an inclusive and supportive educational landscape. These measures collectively ensure that international teachers can thrive in their roles, contributing positively to the educational outcomes of their students and the overall institutional climate.

## 5.4 Conclusion

This study delves into the lived experiences of five Chinese language teachers in a Thai international school, addressing key research gaps, objectives, and questions. The first part outlines the study's background, identifying significant gaps in existing literature and establishing the objectives and research questions. The second part reviews current literature, focusing on international language teachers' experiences, highlighting the influence of structural, cultural, and linguistic factors. The third part details the methodology, employing a phenomenological qualitative approach based on Byrme's cultural dimensions theory to explore the teachers' experiences.

The fourth part reveals the results, identifying five major themes: Professional Identity amidst Collectivism, Cultural Confluence in Teaching, Adapting to Cross-Cultural Challenges, Achieving Equilibrium, and Adjusting to Institutional Policy. These themes illustrate how teachers navigate and respond to their professional environment, balancing personal pedagogical beliefs with institutional norms, and adapting to cultural and linguistic challenges.

The fifth part discusses the findings, linking them to the research questions and emphasizing their theoretical and practical implications. The study underscores the pivotal role of structural factors, such as institutional policies, in shaping teachers' professional identities and adaptation strategies. It also highlights how cross-cultural experiences can enrich pedagogical practices and foster empathy, challenging the predominantly negative portrayal of cross-cultural challenges in existing literature.

## 5.5 Implications for Future Research

Building on the findings and limitations of this study, several directions for future research are proposed to deepen the understanding of international language teachers' experiences and enhance the educational environments they navigate.

Future research should consider expanding the sample size to include a more diverse group of teachers from various countries and cultural backgrounds. This would enhance the generalizability of the findings and provide a more comprehensive picture of the experiences of international teachers. Including teachers from different types of schools (e.g., public vs. private, urban vs. rural) and educational levels (e.g., primary, secondary, tertiary) would also add valuable insights.

Comparative studies across multiple countries and educational systems can illuminate how different cultural, institutional, and policy contexts impact international teachers. Such studies would help identify universal challenges and opportunities, as well as context-specific factors that influence teachers' adaptation and professional identity. Additionally, longitudinal research tracking teachers over time would provide insights into how their experiences and coping strategies evolve, offering a dynamic understanding of their professional trajectories.

Future studies should explore the effectiveness of professional development programs aimed at enhancing cultural competence and language skills among international teachers. Evaluating the impact of these programs can provide evidence-based recommendations for improving teacher training and support. Additionally, research should investigate how institutional policies are implemented at the ground level and their actual impact on teachers' autonomy, agency, and professional identity.

The role of peer support networks, both within and outside the school, in facilitating the adaptation and professional development of international teachers is an area warranting further exploration. Studies can examine how these networks are formed, their structure, and their impact on teachers' well-being and professional practices.

With the increasing integration of technology in education, future research should investigate how digital tools and remote teaching platforms can support international teachers. This includes exploring the challenges and opportunities associated with virtual classrooms, online professional development, and digital communication tools.

By addressing these directions, future studies can contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the experiences of international language teachers, ultimately informing policies and practices that enhance their professional integration and effectiveness.

Practical implications are provided for policymakers, school administrators, educators, and teacher training institutions, advocating for more flexible policies, cultural competence training, and language support services. These measures aim to enhance teachers' integration and effectiveness in foreign educational environments.

However, the study acknowledges its limitations, including the small sample size and focus on a single cultural context, suggesting directions for future research to include larger, more diverse samples and comparative studies across different cultural and institutional settings. This comprehensive exploration contributes valuable insights into the experiences of international teachers, informing both theory and practice in the field of education.

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The image features a large, faint watermark of the Rangsit University logo in the center. The logo consists of a stylized flame or sunburst shape at the top, with a circular base containing radiating lines. Below the logo, the text 'มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University' is written in a semi-circle.

**APPENDIX A**

**CONFIRMATION LETTER FROM THE RESEARCH SCHOOL**

## Research authorization documents

### Authorization for Educational Research

Date: On April 20, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

This document serves as an authorization for YANG YA QI to conduct educational research within the premises of Rajapark International school. The research is aimed at furthering the understanding of educational practices, methods, and outcomes, ultimately leading to the improvement of the school's academic environment and student experience.

### Details of the Research:

- **Research Title:** Exploring lived experiences of expatriate teachers: A phenomenological study of Chinese language teachers at a private school in Thailand
- **Research Duration:** About 3 months
- **Researchers(information):** YANG YA QI ;Master of Education in Bilingual Education; Student ID (6407631); Thailand +66 0842596087; 598907188@qq.com
- **Principal Investigator Information (Department/Faculty, Contact address, Phone number)**  
Rangsit university; Suryadhep Teachers College; 52/347 Muang-Ake Phaholyotin Road, Lak Hok, Muang, Pathum Thani 12000, Thailand +66 960 139 466
- **Project Adviser :** Associate Professor Dr. Saksit Saengboon
- **Project's purpose:** The purpose of the research project is to gain insight into the challenges and opportunities of Chinese teachers in Thailand in life and work, and to discuss the cultural differences involved in their life and work experiences in private schools.
- **Total numbers of participants in this project:** 5 Chinese language teachers in a Thai private school.
- **Importance and background of research problems**  
In recent years, with the development of globalization and the growing demand for multicultural education, the exchanges between China and other countries have become increasingly close, including the Chinese language which serves as a second language (CSL) (Loh et al., 2019). An increasing number of Chinese language teachers go to foreign countries to teach Chinese (Aimin, 2015), and the upsurge of learning Chinese has only increased due to factors such as increasing interactive activities of the world peoples in the borderless world. Because Chinese is one of the most important international languages of the United Nations. Education has long been a significant channel for cultural and knowledge exchange between nations (Duan et al., 2010). In recent years, the increase in global mobility has led to a more diverse educational workforce worldwide, especially in Southeast Asia. Thailand, with its strategic geographical location and open economic policies, has become a focal point for educational exchanges in the region (Sebestyén et al., 2020). This has resulted in a substantial influx of foreign teachers, particularly from China, who are employed in private educational institutions across the country. The experience of these educators is not only pivotal to their personal and professional development but also instrumental in shaping the cross-cultural teaching landscape and bilateral relationships between China and Thailand.

In 2018, the Belt and Road Initiative further promoted the economic development between China and Thailand, and a Chinese learning boom in Thailand (Punyaratabandhu & Swaspitchayaskun, 2018). The educational cooperation between Chinese and Thai schools is believed to promote the cultural exchanges between China and Thailand and enhance mutual understanding and trust in the cause of education opening to the outside world to build a system of people-to-people exchanges and promote people-to-people exchanges and mutual learning between China and Thailand (Trisanawadee, 2020). As a result, long-term exchanges between China and Thailand makes Chinese culture gradually enter the Thai people's daily life. Private education in Thailand has long been a significant facet of the country's commitment to academic excellence and cultural diversity. In recent years, the burgeoning relationship between China and Thailand, underscored by economic ties and cultural exchanges, has led to an influx of Chinese educators in Thai private schools (Welch, 2018). These teachers bring with them a plethora of experiences, pedagogical methods, and cultural perspectives that are not only reshaping the landscape of private education in Thailand but also the very fabric of transnational educational exchanges.

The demand for Chinese language proficiency has surged due to China's expanding role in global business and politics (Zhang et al., 2020). This has positioned Chinese teachers as critical assets within Thai private schools, where parents and administrators are keen to equip students with the language skills necessary for future opportunities. Through a series of agreements between China and Thailand, many Chinese language teacher volunteers have been recruited to teach Chinese (Guo et al., 2020). In Thai schools to provide Chinese education for Thai students. Thailand's "Chinese fever" has taken the lead among that of other ASEAN countries, propelled by the long-time historical bond between the peoples of the two nations.

As China's Belt and Road Initiative continues to forge tighter economic and educational linkages with Southeast Asian countries, the professional experiences of Chinese teachers in these transnational contexts gain importance (Cheng & Koh, 2022). Their experiences are shaped by numerous factors, including language barriers, cultural differences, pedagogical expectations, professional development opportunities, and social integration, which are pivotal in understanding their overall job satisfaction and impact on the educational institutions they serve.

- **Research process**

My research is a phenomenological method, using qualitative research, interviewing and observing the research participants, and organizing transcripts, into their work and into their lives, 1) What is the essence of the lived experiences encountered by the Chinese teachers? 2) What opportunities and challenges did they encounter as Chinese teachers? 3) How and to what extent did the Chinese teachers cope with the cultural differences at work?

- **Research Questions:** 1) What is the essence of the lived experiences encountered by the Chinese teachers? 2) What opportunities and challenges did they encounter as Chinese teachers? 3) How and to what extent did the Chinese teachers cope with the cultural differences at work?

- **Research Objectives:** 1) to explore the lived experiences of Chinese language teachers in a Thai private schools; 2) to identify the opportunities and challenges encountered by these teachers in their professional lives; 3) to examine the ways in which Chinese language

teachers interact with and respond to their working experiences influenced by cultural differences.

- Expected output and Expected outcome: From the perspective of practice, I think this study can be provided to future Chinese teachers with more reference experience and useful strategies in the face of cultural differences, and prevent some difficulties in advance, they will also learn a lot of challenges and opportunities in life and work in Thailand.

#### Conditions and Expectations:

1. The researchers are expected to abide by all school rules and regulations while conducting the research.
2. Prior approval must be sought for any activity that may disrupt the regular functioning of the school.
3. The researchers must ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of all participants, including students, teachers, and staff, are protected.
4. All data collected during the research must be used solely for the stated purpose and must be disposed of or stored securely after the completion of the research.
5. The researchers are required to submit a final report outlining the findings and recommendations of the research.

#### Authorization:

Upon careful review and consideration, we hereby authorize YANG YAQI to conduct the aforementioned educational research within our school. We are confident that this research will contribute positively to the academic environment and student experience at School.

Sincerely,

Manager of school : Dr. Phraephat Lerdrathaphat

Name of School: Rajapark International school

Contact Information: Phlabphla, Wang Thonglang, Bangkok 10310, +66 2 318 9899

Manager of school

()

Date 20/4/2024



Signature of Participant

(YANG YA QI)



Date 20/4/2024



**APPENDIX B**

**INVITATION LETTERS FOR THREE IOC EXPERTS**

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University

 มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต RANGSIT UNIVERSITY		<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="font-size: small;">           โทร: 02957 2200            โทรสาร: 02957 2200            โทรสาร: 02957 2200         </td> <td style="font-size: small;">           Rangsit University            Rangsit Ave., Pathumthani 12110            Pathumthani 12110, Thailand         </td> <td style="font-size: small;">           T: 860 2297 2200-30            F: 860 2291 1751            E: adm@rsu.ac.th         </td> </tr> </table>	โทร: 02957 2200 โทรสาร: 02957 2200 โทรสาร: 02957 2200	Rangsit University Rangsit Ave., Pathumthani 12110 Pathumthani 12110, Thailand	T: 860 2297 2200-30 F: 860 2291 1751 E: adm@rsu.ac.th
โทร: 02957 2200 โทรสาร: 02957 2200 โทรสาร: 02957 2200	Rangsit University Rangsit Ave., Pathumthani 12110 Pathumthani 12110, Thailand	T: 860 2297 2200-30 F: 860 2291 1751 E: adm@rsu.ac.th			

STC.4800/1188  
 29 May 2024  
 Subject: Invitation to be our IOC (Item Objective Congruence) expert  
 Dear Ajarn Chatchawan Chaiyasat,

Miss Yaqi Yang student number 6407631, a student in the Master of Education (Bilingual Education) who has already completed her coursework and thesis proposal defense on 27 March 2024. Her research is entitled "Exploring Lived Experiences of Expatriate Teachers: A Mixed-Methods Study of Chinese Language Teachers at A Private School in Thailand". Currently, she is in the stage of collecting and analyzing data Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saksit Saengboon is her advisor.

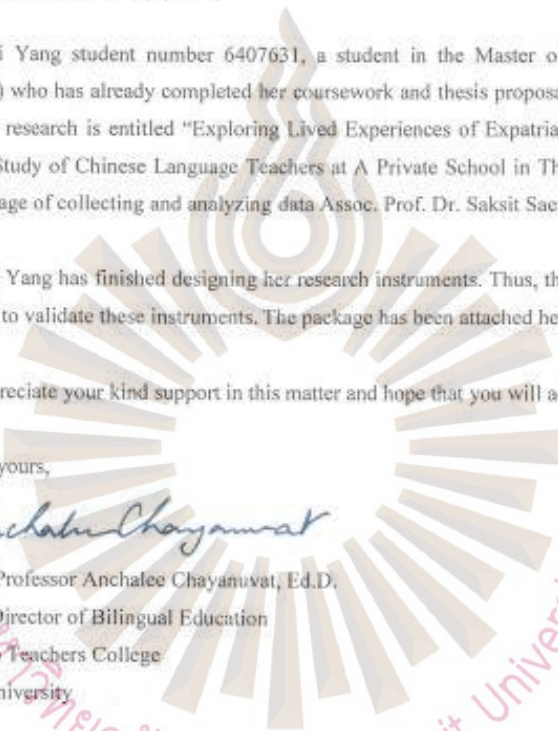
Miss Yaqi Yang has finished designing her research instruments. Thus, the college would like to invite you to validate these instruments. The package has been attached herewith.

I truly appreciate your kind support in this matter and hope that you will accept my invitation.

Sincerely yours,

*Anchalee Chayanuvat*



Assistant Professor Anchalee Chayanuvat, Ed.D.  
 Program Director of Bilingual Education  
 Suryadhep Teachers College  
 Rangsit University



มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University

[www.rsu.ac.th](http://www.rsu.ac.th)

## Expert 1

 มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต RANGSIT UNIVERSITY		มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University 10400	Rangsit University Phayathai Rd., Pathumthani 99 Pathumthani 12000, Thailand	T. 084 2997 2700-30 F. 084 2791 5157 E. info@rsu.ac.th
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STC.4800/1189

29 May 2024

Subject: Invitation to be our IOC (Item Objective Congruence) expert

Dear Dr. Pilanut Phusawisot,

Miss Yaqi Yang student number 6407631, a student in the Master of Education (Bilingual Education) who has already completed her coursework and thesis proposal defense on 27 March 2024. Her research is entitled "Exploring Lived Experiences of Expatriate Teachers: A Mixed-Methods Study of Chinese Language Teachers at A Private School in Thailand". Currently, she is in the stage of collecting and analyzing data. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saksit Saengboon is her advisor.

Miss Yaqi Yang has finished designing her research instruments. Thus, the college would like to invite you to validate these instruments. The package has been attached herewith.

I truly appreciate your kind support in this matter and hope that you will accept my invitation.

Sincerely yours,



*Anchalee Chayanuvat*

Assistant Professor Anchalee Chayanuvat, Ed.D.  
 Program Director of Bilingual Education  
 Suryadhep Teachers College  
 Rangsit University

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University

www.rsu.ac.th

## Expert 2

 มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต RANGSIT UNIVERSITY		<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="font-size: small;">               มหาวิทยาลัย                รังสิต กรุงเทพมหานคร                10400             </td> <td style="font-size: small;">               Rangsit University                Pathumwan, Pathumthani 12110                Pathumthani 12000, Thailand             </td> <td style="font-size: small;">               T. 080 2957 2200-30                F. 080 2791 1751                E. info@rsu.ac.th             </td> </tr> </table>	มหาวิทยาลัย รังสิต กรุงเทพมหานคร 10400	Rangsit University Pathumwan, Pathumthani 12110 Pathumthani 12000, Thailand	T. 080 2957 2200-30 F. 080 2791 1751 E. info@rsu.ac.th
มหาวิทยาลัย รังสิต กรุงเทพมหานคร 10400	Rangsit University Pathumwan, Pathumthani 12110 Pathumthani 12000, Thailand	T. 080 2957 2200-30 F. 080 2791 1751 E. info@rsu.ac.th			


STC.4800/1190  
 29 May 2024  
 Subject: Invitation to be our IOC (Item Objective Congruence) expert  
 Dear Ajarn Kantavee Wiensima,

Miss Yaqi Yang student number 6407631, a student in the Master of Education (Bilingual Education) who has already completed her coursework and thesis proposal defense on 27 March 2024. Her research is entitled "Exploring Lived Experiences of Expatriate Teachers: A Mixed-Methods Study of Chinese Language Teachers at A Private School in Thailand". Currently, she is in the stage of collecting and analyzing data Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saksit Saengboon is her advisor.

Miss Yaqi Yang has finished designing her research instruments. Thus, the college would like to invite you to validate these instruments. The package has been attached herewith.

I truly appreciate your kind support in this matter and hope that you will accept my invitation.

Sincerely yours,

  
 Assistant Professor Anchalee Chayanuvat, Ed.D.  
 Program Director of Bilingual Education  
 Suryadhep Teachers College  
 Rangsit University

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University

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### Expert 3



**Appendix: Question of semi-structured interview**

NO.	Statement
Question 1	Could you please explain how you normally conduct your classes in terms of student-student and teacher-student interactions?
Question 2	How do you view institutional policies regarding instructions in terms of opportunities and/or challenges?
Question 3	In terms of the implementation of the school curriculum, how do you consider the roles of school administrators in this regard?
Question 4	Please explain whether you feel that you've sufficient freedom in implementing the school curriculum, What is your experience when implementing the school curriculum? How do you feel? Explain whether you feel that you've sufficient freedom in implementing the school curriculum.
Question 5	When communicating with your Thai colleagues at school, do you feel whether you've encountered any linguistic or cultural barriers due to your inability to speak Thai? How about any linguistic and cultural challenges they faced with when communicating with Thai students in class?
Question 6	Please explain whether you've encountered any problems juggling between your personal life and professional life.
Question 7	Could you share with us the extent to which you feel you've enough autonomy or freedom in working as Chinese teachers of Chinese to Thai students? Please provide some examples, if possible.
Question 8	To what extent do you receive professional and moral support from the administrators, colleagues and/or students? Please explain.
Question 9	Have you encountered any conflicting experiences in teaching Chinese at the school? If so, how do you deal with those experiences? Please explain.

<b>NO.</b>	<b>Statement</b>
Question 10	When faced with challenges in teaching Chinese at the school, how have you managed to create your own comfort zone where you feel empowered or liberated in performing your teaching job? Please explain.
Question 11	What strategies have you used to adjust yourself to the Thai culture in general and Thai classroom culture in particular? Please explain.



**BIOGRAPHY**

Name	Yang Yaqi
Date of birth	May 20, 1994
Place of birth	Sichuan, China
Education background	Sichuan Normal University, China Bachelor of Primary School Education, 2020 Rangsit University, Thailand Master of Education in Bilingual Education and English Language Teaching, 2024
Address	Sichuan, China
Email Address	598907188@qq.com

